The Apartment

by

Billy Wilder

&

I.A.L. Diamond

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FADE IN:

A DESK COMPUTER

A man's hand is punching out a series of figures on the keyboard.

BUD (V.O.)
On November first, 1959, the population of New York City was if you laid all these people end to end, figuring an average height of five feet six and a half inches, they would reach from Times Square to the outskirts of Karachi, Pakistan. I know facts like this because I work for an insurance company --

THE INSURANCE BUILDING - A WET, FALL DAY

It's a big mother, covering a square block in lower Manhattan, all glass and aluminum, jutting into the leaden sky.

BUD (V.O.)
-- Consolidated Life of New York. We are one of the top five companies in the country -- last year we wrote nine-point-three billion dollars worth of policies. Our home office has 31,259 employees -- which is more than the entire population of Natchez, Mississippi, of Gallup, New Mexico.

INT. NINETEENTH FLOOR

Acres of gray steel desk, gray steel filing cabinets, and steel-gray faces under indirect light. One wall is lined with glass-enclosed cubicles for the supervisory personnel. It is all very neat, antiseptic, impersonal. The only human tough is supplied by a bank of IBM machines, clacking away cheerfully in the background.

BUD (V.O.)
I work on the nineteenth floor -- Ordinary Policy Department - Premium Accounting Division - Section W -- desk number 861.

CONTINUED:

DESK 861

Like every other desk, it has a small name plate attached to the side. This one reads C.C. BAXTER.

BUD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
My name is C.C. Baxter - C. for Calvin, C. for Clifford -- however, most people call me Bud. I've been with Consolidated Life for three years and ten months. I started in the branch office in Cincinnati, then transferred to New York. My take-home pay is $94.70 a week, and there are the usual fringe benefits.

BAXTER is about thirty, serious, hard-working, unobtrusive. He wears a Brooks Brothers type suit, which he bought somewhere on Seventh Avenue, upstairs. There is a stack of perforated premium cards in front of him, and he is totaling them on the computing machine. He looks off.

ELECTRIC WALL CLOCK

It shows 5:19. With a click, the minute hand jumps to 5:20, and a piercing bell goes off.

BUD (V.O.)
The hours in our department are to 5:20 --

FULL SHOT - OFFICE

Instantly all work stops. Papers are being put away, typewriters and computing machines are covered, and everybody starts clearing out. Within ten seconds, the place is empty -- except for Bud Baxter, still bent over his work, marooned in a sea of abandoned desks.

BUD (V.O.)
-- they're staggered by floors, so that sixteen elevators can handle the 31,259 employees without a serious traffic jam. As for myself, I very often stay on at the office and work for an extra hour or two -- especially when the weather is bad. It's not that I'm overly ambitious -- it's just a way of killing time, until it's all right for me to go home.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BUD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You see, I have this little problem with my apartment --

DISSOLVE TO:

STREET IN THE WEST SIXTIES - EVENING

Bud, wearing a weather-beaten Ivy League raincoat and a narrow-brimmed brown hat, comes walking slowly down the street skirting the puddles on the sidewalk. He stops in front of a converted brownstone, looks up.

BUD (V.O.)
I live in the West Sixties - just half a block from Central Park. My rent is $84 a month. It used to be eighty until last July when Mrs. Lieberman, the landlady, put in a second-hand air conditioning unit.

The windows on the second floor are lit, but the shades are drawn. From inside drifts the sound of cha cha music.

BUD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It's a real nice apartment - nothing fancy -- but kind of cozy -- just right for a bachelor. The only problem is - I can't always get in when I want to.

INT. THE APARTMENT - EVENING

What used to be the upstairs parlor of a one-family house in the early 1900's has been chopped up into living room, bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. The wallpaper is faded, the carpets are threadbare, and the upholstered furniture could stand shampooing.

There are lots of books, a record player, stacks of records, a television set (21 inches and 24 payments), unframed prints from the Museum of Modern Art (Picasso, Braque, Klee) tacked up on the walls. Only one lamp is lit, for mood, and a cha cha record is spinning around on the phonograph.

On the coffee table in front of the couch are a couple of cocktail glasses, a pitcher with some martini dregs, an almost empty bottle of vodka, a soup bowl with a few melting ice cubes at the bottom, some potato chips, an ashtray filled with cigar stubs and lipstick-stained cigarette butts, and a woman's handbag.

CONTINUED:

MR. KIRKEBY, a dapper, middle-aged man, stands in front of the mirror above the fake fireplace, buttoning up his vest. He does not notice that the buttons are out of alignment.

KIRKEBY
(calling off)
Come on, Sylvia. It's getting late.

SYLVIA, a first baseman of a dame, redheaded and saftig, comes cha cha-ing into the room, trying to fasten a necklace as she hums along with the music. She dances amorously up to Kirkeby.

KIRKEBY (CONT'D)
Cut it out, Sylvia. We got to get out of here.

He helps her with the necklace, then turns off the phonograph.

SYLVIA
What's the panic? I'm going to have another martooni.

She crosses to the coffee table, starts to pour the remnants of the vodka into the pitcher.

KIRKEBY
Please, Sylvia! It's a quarter to nine!

SYLVIA
(dropping slivers of ice into the pitcher)
First you can't wait to get me up here, and now -- rush, rush, rush! Makes a person feel cheap.

KIRKEBY
Sylvia -- sweetie -- it's not that -- but I promised the guy I'd be out of here by eight o'clock, positively.

SYLVIA
(pouring martini)
What guy? Whose apartment is this, anyway?

CONTINUED: (2)

KIRKEBY
(exasperated)
What's the difference? Some schnook that works in the office.

EXT. BROWNSTONE HOUSE - EVENING

Bud is pacing back and forth, throwing an occasional glance at the lit windows of his apartment. A middle-aged woman with a dog on a leash approaches along the sidewalk. She is MRS. LIEBERMAN, the dog is a Scottie, and they are both wearing raincoats. Seeing them, Bud leans casually against the stoop.

MRS. LIEBERMAN
Good evening, Mr. Baxter.

BUD
Good evening, Mrs. Lieberman.

MRS. LIEBERMAN
Some weather we're having. Must be from all the meshugass at Cape Canaveral.
(she is half-way up the steps)
You locked out of your apartment?

BUD
No, no. Just waiting for a friend. Good night, Mrs. Lieberman.

MRS. LIEBERMAN
Good night, Mr. Baxter.

She and the Scottie disappear into the house. Bud resumes pacing, his eyes on the apartment windows. Suddenly he stops -- the lights have gone out.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - EVENING

Kirkeby, in coat and hat, stands in the open doorway of the darkened apartment.

KIRKEBY
Come on -- come on, Sylvia!

Sylvia comes cha cha-ing out, wearing an imitation Persian lamb coat, her hat askew on her head, bag, gloves, and an umbrella in her hand.

CONTINUED:

SYLVIA
Some setup you got here. A real, honest-to-goodness love nest.

KIRKEBY
Sssssh.

He locks the door, slips the key under the doormat.

SYLVIA
(still cha cha-ing)
You're one button off, Mr. Kirkeby.

She points to his exposed vest. Kirkeby looks down, sees that the buttons are out of line. He starts to rebutton them as they move down the narrow, dimly-lit stairs.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
You got to watch those things. Wives are getting smarter all the time. Take Mr. Bernheim -- in the Claims Department -- came home one night with lipstick on his shirt -- told his wife he had a shrimp cocktail for lunch -- so she took it out to the lab and had it analyzed -- so now she has the house in Great Neck and the children and the new Jaguar --

KIRKEBY
Don't you ever stop talking?

EXT. BROWNSTONE HOUSE - EVENING

Bud, standing on the sidewalk, sees the front door start to open. He moves quickly into the areaway, almost bumping into the ashcans, stands in the shadow of the stoop with his back turned discreetly toward Kirkeby and Sylvia as they come down the steps.

KIRKEBY
Where do you live?

SYLVIA
I told you -- with my mother.

KIRKEBY
Where does she live?

SYLVIA
A hundred and seventy-ninth street -
- the Bronx.

CONTINUED:

KIRKEBY
All right -- I'll take you to the subway.

SYLVIA
Like hell you will. You'll buy me a cab.

KIRKEBY
Why do all you dames have to live in the Bronx?

SYLVIA
You mean you bring other girls up here?

KIRKEBY
Certainly not. I'm a happily married man.

They move down the street. Bud appears from the areaway, glances after them, then mounts the steps, goes through the front door.

INT. VESTIBULE - EVENING

There are eight mailboxes. Bud opens his, takes out a magazine in a paper wrapper and a few letters, proceeds up the staircase.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - EVENING

Bud, glancing through his mail, comes up to the door of his apartment. As he bends down to lift the doormat, the door of the rear apartment opens and MRS. DREYFUSS, a jovial well-fed middle-aged woman, puts out a receptacle full of old papers and empty cans. Bud looks around from his bent position.

BUD
Oh. Hello there, Mrs. Dreyfuss.

MRS. DREYFUSS
Something the matter?

BUD
I seem to have dropped my key.
(faking a little search)
Oh -- here it is.

He slides it out from under the mat, straightens up.

CONTINUED:

MRS. DREYFUSS
Such a racket I heard in your place -- maybe you had burglars.

BUD
Oh, you don't have to worry about that -- nothing in there that anybody would want to steal...
(unlocking door quickly)
Good night, Mrs. Dreyfuss.

He ducks into the apartment.

INT. THE APARTMENT - EVENING

Bud snaps on the lights, drops the mail and the key on a small table, looks around with distaste at the mess his visitors have left behind. He sniffs the stale air, crosses to the window, pulls up the shade, opens it wide.

Now he takes off his hat and raincoat, gathers up the remains of the cocktail party from the coffee table. Loaded down with glasses, pitcher, empty vodka bottle, ice bowl and potato chips, he starts toward the kitchen.

The doorbell rings. Bud stops, undecided what to do with the stuff in his hands, then crosses to the hall door, barely manages to get it open. Mr. Kirkeby barges in past him.

KIRKEBY
The little lady forgot her galoshes.

He scours the room for the missing galoshes.

BUD
Mr. Kirkeby, I don't like to complain -- but you were supposed to be out of here by eight.

KIRKEBY
I know, Buddy-boy, I know. But those things don't always run on schedule -- like a Greyhound bus.

BUD
I don't mind in the summer -- but on a rainy night -- and I haven't had any dinner yet --

CONTINUED:

KIRKEBY
Sure, sure. Look, kid -- I put in a good word for you with Sheldrake, in Personnel.

BUD
(perking up)
Mr. Sheldrake?

KIRKEBY
That's right. We were discussing our department -- manpower-wise -- and promotion-wise --
(finds the galoshes behind a chair)
-- and I told him what a bright boy you were. They're always on the lookout for young executives.

BUD
Thank you, Mr. Kirkeby.

KIRKEBY
(starting toward door)
You're on your way up, Buddy-boy. And you're practically out of liquor.

BUD
I know. Mr. Eichelberger -- in the Mortgage Loan Department -- last night he had a little Halloween party here --

KIRKEBY
Well, lay in some vodka and some vermouth -- and put my name on it.

BUD
Yes, Mr. Kirkeby. You still owe me for the last two bottles --

KIRKEBY
I'll pay you on Friday.
(in the open doorwaY)
And whatever happened to those little cheese crackers you used to have around?

He exits, shutting the door.

CONTINUED: (2)

BUD
(making a mental note)
Cheese crackers.

He carries his load into the kitchen. The kitchen is minute and cluttered. On the drainboard are an empty vermouth bottle, some ice-cube trays, a jar with one olive in it, and a crumpled potato-chip bag. Bud comes in, dumps his load on the drainboard, opens the old-fashioned refrigerator. He takes out a frozen chicken dinner, turns the oven on, lights it with a match, rips the protective paper off the aluminum tray and shoves it in. Now he starts to clean up the mess on the drainboard.

He rinses the cocktail glasses, is about to empty the martini pitcher into the sink, thinks better of it. He pours the contents into a glass, plops the lone olive out of the jar, scoops up the last handful of potato chips, toasts an imaginary companion, and drinks up.

Then he pulls a wastebasket from under the sink. It is brimful of liquor bottles, and Bud adds the empty vodka and vermouth bottles and the olive jar. Picking up the heavy receptacle, he carries it through the living room toward the hall door.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - EVENING

The door of Bud's apartment opens, and Bud comes out with the wastebasket full of empty bottles. Just then, DR. DAVID DREYFUSS, whose wife we met earlier, comes trudging up the stairs. He is a tall, heavy-set man of fifty, with a bushy mustache, wearing a bulky overcoat and carrying an aged medical bag.

DR. DREYFUSS
Good evening, Baxter.

BUD
Hi, Doc. Had a late call?

DR. DREYFUSS
Yeah. Some clown at Schrafft's Street ate a club sandwich, and forgot to take out the toothpick.

BUD
Oh.
(sets down wastebasket)
'Bye, Doc.

CONTINUED:

DR. DREYFUSS
(indicating bottles)
Say, Baxter -- the way you're belting that stuff, you must have a pair of cast-iron kidneys.

BUD
Oh, that's not me. It's just that once in a while, I have some people in for a drink.

DR. DREYFUSS
As a matter of fact, you must be an iron man all around. From what I hear through the walls, you got something going for you every night.

BUD
I'm sorry if it gets noisy --

DR. DREYFUSS
Sometimes, there's a twi-night double-header.
(shaking his head)
A nebbish like you!

BUD
(uncomfortable)
Yeah. Well -- see you, Doc.
(starts to back through door)

DR. DREYFUSS
You know, Baxter -- I'm doing some research at the Columbia Medical Center -- and I wonder if you could do us a favor?

BUD
Me?

DR. DREYFUSS
When you make out your will -- and the way you're going, you should -- would you mind leaving your body to the University?

BUD
My body? I'm afraid you guys would be disappointed. Good night, Doc.

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. DREYFUSS
Slow down, kid.

He starts into the rear apartment as Bud closes the door.

INT. THE APARTMENT - EVENING

Bud, loosening his tie, goes into the kitchen, opens the oven, turns off the gas. He takes a coke out of the refrigerator, uncaps it, gets a knife and fork from a drawer, and using his handkerchief as a potholder, pulls the hot aluminum tray out of the oven. He carries everything out into the living room. In the living room, Bud sets his dinner down on the coffee table, settles himself on the couch.

He rears up as something stabs him, reaches under his buttocks, pulls out a hairpin. He drops it into an ashtray, tackles his dinner. Without even looking, he reaches over to the end table and presses the remote TV station-selector.

He takes a sip from the coke bottle, his eyes on the TV screen across the room. The picture on the TV set jells quickly. Against a background of crisscrossing searchlights, a pompous announcer is making his spiel.

ANNOUNCER
-- from the world's greatest library of film classics, we proudly present --
(fanfare)
Greta Garbo -- John Barrymore --
Joan Crawford -- Wallace Beery --
and Lionel Barrymore in --
(fanfare)

GRAND HOTEL!

There is an extended fanfare. Bud leans forward, chewing excitedly on a chicken leg.

ANNOUNCER
But first, a word from our sponsor. If you smoke the modern way, don't be fooled by phony filter claims --

Bud, still eating, automatically reaches for the station-selector, pushes the button. A new channel pops on. It features a Western -- Cockamamie Indians are attacking a stagecoach. That's not for Bud.

He switches to another station. In a frontier saloon, Gower Street cowboys are dismantling the furniture and each other.

CONTINUED:

Bud wearily changes channels. But he can't get away from Westerns -- on this station, the U.S. Cavalry is riding to the rescue. Will they get there in time? Bud doesn't wait to find out.

He switches channels again, and is back where he started. On the screen, once more, is the announcer standing in front of the crisscrossing searchlights.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
And now, Grand Hotel -- starring Greta Garbo, John Barrymore, Joan Crawford --
(Bud is all eyes and ears again)
-- Wallace Beery, and Lionel Barrymore. But first -- a word from our alternate sponsor.
(unctuously)
Friends, do you have wobbly dentures -- ?

That does it. Bud turns the set off in disgust. The TV screen blacks out, except for a small pinpoint of light in the center, which gradually fades away.

In the bathroom, Bud, in pajamas by now, is brushing his teeth. From the shower rod hang three pairs of socks on stretchers. Bud takes a vial from the medicine shelf, shakes out a sleeping pill, washes it down with a glass of water. He turns the light off, walks into the bedroom.

In the bedroom, the single bed is made, and the lamp on the night table is on. Bud plugs in the electric blanket, turns the dial on. Then he climbs into bed, props up the pillow behind him. From the night table, he picks up the magazine that arrived in the mail, slides it out of the wrapper, opens it.

It's the new issue of PLAYBOY. Bud leafs through it till he comes to the piece de resistance of the magazine. He unfolds the overleaf, glances at it casually, refolds it, then turns to the back of the magazine and starts to read.

What he is so avidly interested in is the men's fashion section. There is a layout titled WHAT THE YOUNG EXECUTIVE WILL WEAR with a sub-head reading The Bowler is Back.

Illustrating the article are several photographs of male models wearing various styles of bowlers. Bud is definitely in the market for a bowler, but somehow his mind starts wandering.

CONTINUED: (2)

He turns back to the overleaf again, unfolds it, studies it, then holds the magazine up vertically to get a different perspective on the subject. By now the sleeping pill is beginning to take effect, and he yawns.

He drops the magazine on the floor, kills the light, settles down to sleep. The room is dark except for the glow from the dial of the electric blanket. Three seconds.

Then the phone jangles shrilly in the living room. Bud stumbles groggily out of bed, and putting on his slippers, makes his way into the living room. He switches on the light, picks up the phone.

BUD
Hello? -- Hello? -- yes, this is Baxter.

INT. PHONE BOOTH IN A MANHATTAN BAR - NIGHT

On the night is a hearty man of about forty-five, nothing gut personality, most of it obnoxious. His name is DOBISCH. Outside the booth is a blonde babe, slightly boozed, and beyond there is a suggestion of the packed, smoky joint.

DOBISCH
Hiya, Buddy-boy. I'm in this bar on Sixty-first Street -- and I got to thinking about you -- and I figured I'd give you a little buzz.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Well, that's very nice of you -- but who is this?

INT. PHONE BOOTH

DOBISCH
Dobisch -- Joe Dobisch, in Administration.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
(snapping to attention)
Oh, yes, Mr. Dobisch. I didn't recognize your voice --

INT. PHONE BOOTH

DOBISCH
That's okay, Buddy-boy. Now like I was saying, I'm in this joint on Sixty-first -- and I think I got lucky --
(glances toward blonde)
-- she's a skater with the Ice Show
(he chuckles)
-- and I thought maybe I could bring her up for a quiet drink.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
I'm sorry, Mr. Dobisch. You know I like to help you guys out -- but it's sort of late -- so why don't we make it some other time?

INT. PHONE BOOTH

DOBISCH
Buddy-boy -- she won't keep that long -- not even on ice. Listen, kid, I can't pass this up -- she looks like Marilyn Monroe.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
I don't care if it is Marilyn Monroe -- I'm already in bed -- and I've taken a sleeping pill -- so I'm afraid the answer is no.

INT. PHONE BOOTH

DOBISCH
(pulling rank)
Look, Baxter -- we're making out the monthly efficiency rating -- and I'm putting you in the top ten. Now you don't want to louse yourself up, do you?

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Of course not. But -- how can I be efficient in the office if I don't get enough sleep at night?

INT. PHONE BOOTH

DOBISCH
It's only eleven -- and I just want the place for forty-five minutes.

The blonde opens the door of the phone booth, leans in.

BLONDE
I'm getting lonely. Who are you talking to, anyway?

DOBISCH
My mother.

BLONDE
That's sweet. That's real sweet.

Dobisch shuts the door in her face.

DOBISCH
(into phone again)
Make it thirty minutes. What do you say, Bud?

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
(a last stand)
I'm all out of liquor -- and there's no clean glasses -- no cheese crackers -- no nothing.

INT. PHONE BOOTH

DOBISCH
Let me worry about that. Just leave the key under the mat and clear out.

INT. THE APARTMENT

BUD
(into phone; resigned)
Yes, Mr. Dobisch.

He hangs up, shuffles back into the bedroom.

BUD (CONT'D)
(muttering to himself)
Anything you say, Mr. Dobisch -- no trouble at all, Mr. Dobisch -- be my guest --

CONTINUED:

He reappears from the bedroom, pulling his trousers on over his pajama pants.

BUD (CONT'D)
-- We never close at Buddy-boy's --
looks like Marilyn Monroe --
(he chuckles a la Dobisch)

Putting on his raincoat and hat, Bud opens the hall door, takes the key from the table, shoves it under the doormat. His eyes fall on the Dreyfuss apartment, and there is some concern on his face. He picks up a pad and pencil from the table, prints something in block letters.

Tearing off the top sheet, he impales it on the spindle of the phonograph, then walks out, closing the door behind him. The note reads: NOT TOO LOUD

THE NEIGHBORS ARE COMPLAINING

EXT. BROWNSTONE HOUSE - NIGHT

Bud comes out the door, in slippered feet, pants and raincoat over his pajamas. As he sleep-walks down the steps, a cab pulls up in front of the house. Bud ducks discreetly into the areaway.

Mr. Dobisch, bareheaded, emerges cautiously from the cab. Between the fingers of his hands he is carrying four long-stemmed glasses, brimful of stingers. The blonde steps out, holding his hat.

BLONDE
This the place?

DOBISCH
Yeah.
(to cab driver)
How much?

CABBIE
Seventy cents.

Dobisch, his hands full of stingers, turns to the blonde, indicates his pants pocket.

DOBISCH
Get the money, will you?

The blonde plants the hat on top of his head, unbuttons his overcoat, reaches into his pants pocket. As she does so, she jogs his elbow.

CONTINUED:

DOBISCH (CONT'D)
Watch those stingers!

The blonde has taken out Dobisch's money clip, with about a hundred dollars in it.

DOBISCH (CONT'D)
Give him a buck.

The blonde peels a bill off, hands it to the cabbie, hangs on to the rest of the roll just a second too long.

DOBISCH (CONT'D)
Now put it back, honey.
(she does)
Atta girl.

The cab drives off. Dobisch and the blonde start up the steps to the house.

BLONDE
You sure this is a good idea?

DOBISCH
Can't think of a better one.

BLONDE
(holding door open for him)
I mean - barging in on your mother - - in the middle of the night?

DOBISCH
(edging past her with stingers)
Don't worry about the old lady. One squawk from her, and she's out of a job.

In the areaway, Bud has overheard them, and it doesn't make him any happier. He steps out on the sidewalk, shuffles down the street.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

The blonde and Dobisch, his hands full of stingers, come up to Bud's door.

DOBISCH
Get the key, will you.

Automatically, she reaches into his pocket.

CONTINUED:

DOBISCH (CONT'D)
Not there. Under the mat.

BLONDE
(puzzled)
Under the mat?
(picks up key)

DOBISCH
(impatiently)
Open up, open up -- we haven't got all night.

The blonde unlocks the door to the apartment, opens it.

BLONDE
(suspiciously)
So this is your mother's apartment?

DOBISCH
That's right. Maria Ouspenskaya.

BLONDE
(sticking her head in)
Hiya, Ouspenskaya.

Dobisch nudges her inside with his knee, kicks the door shut behind him. The landing is empty for a second. Then the door of the rear apartment opens, and Dr. Dreyfuss, in a beaten bathrobe, sets out a couple of empty milk bottles with a note in them. Suddenly, from Bud's apartment, comes a shrill female giggle. Dr. Dreyfuss reacts. Then the cha cha music starts full blast.

DR. DREYFUSS
(calling to his wife, off-screen)
Mildred -- he's at it again.

Shaking his head, he closes the door.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Bud, in raincoat and slippered feet, turns in off the street, plods along a path in the deserted park. He stops at a damp bench under a lamp post, sits.

In the background, lights shine from the towering buildings on Central Park South. Bud huddles inside his raincoat, shivering. He is very sleepy by now.

CONTINUED:

His eyes close and his head droops. A gust of wind sends wet leaves swirling across the bench. Bud doesn't stir. He is all in.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. LOBBY INSURANCE BUILDING - DAY

It's a quarter to nine of a gray November morning, and work-bound employees are piling in through the doors. Among them is Bud, bundled up in a raincoat, hat, heavy muffler and wool gloves, and carrying a box of Kleenex. He coughs, pulls out a tissue, wipes his dripping nose. He has a bad cold. The lobby is an imposing, marbled affair, as befits a company which last year wrote 9.3 billion dollars worth of insurance. There are sixteen elevators, eight of them marked LOCAL - FLOORS 1-18, and opposite them eight marked EXPRESS - FLOORS 18-37. The starter, a uniformed Valkyrie wielding a clicker, is directing the flow of traffic into the various elevators. Bud joins the crowd in front of one of the express elevators. Also standing there is Mr. Kirkeby, reading the Herald-Tribune.

BUD
(hoarsely)
Good morning, Mr. Kirkeby.

KIRKEBY
(as if he just knew him vaguely)
Oh, how are you, Baxter. They keeping you busy these days?

BUD
Yes, sir. They are indeed.
(he sniffs)

The elevator doors open, revealing the operator. She is in her middle twenties and her name is FRAN KUBELIK. Maybe it's the way she's put together, maybe it's her face, or maybe it's just the uniform -- in any case, there is something very appealing about her. She is also an individualist -- she wears a carnation in her lapel, which is strictly against regulations. As the elevator loads, she greets the passengers cheerfully.

CONTINUED:

FRAN
(rattling it off)
Morning, Mr. Kessel -- Morning, Miss Robinson -- Morning, Mr. Kirkeby -- Morning, Mr. Williams -- Morning, Miss Livingston -- Morning, Mr. McKellway -- Morning, Mr. Pirelli -- Morning, Mrs. Schubert --

Interspersed is an occasional "Morning, Miss Kubelik" from the passengers.

FRAN (CONT'D)
Morning, Mr. Baxter.

BUD
Morning, Miss Kubelik.

He takes his hat off -- he is the only one. The express is now loaded.

STARTER
(working the clicker)
That's all. Take it away.

FRAN
(shutting the door)
Watch the door, please. Blasting off.

INT. ELEVATOR

Bud is standing right next to Fran as the packed express shoots up.

BUD
(studying her)
What did you do to your hair?

FRAN
It was making me nervous, so I chopped it off. Big mistake, huh?

BUD
I sort of like it.

He sniffs, takes out a Kleenex, wipes his nose.

FRAN
Say, you got a lulu.

CONTINUED:

BUD
Yeah. I better not get too close.

FRAN
Oh, I never catch colds.

BUD
Really? I was looking at some figures from the Sickness and Accident Claims Division -- do you know that the average New Yorker between the ages of twenty and fifty has two and a half colds a year?

FRAN
That makes me feel just terrible.

BUD
Why?

FRAN
Well, to make the figures come out even -- since I have no colds a year -- some poor slob must have five colds a year.

BUD
That's me.
(dabs his nose)

FRAN
You should have stayed in bed this morning.

BUD
I should have stayed in bed last night.

The elevator has slowed down, now stops. Fran opens the door.

FRAN
Nineteen. Watch your step.

About a third of the passengers get out, including Bud and Mr. Kirkeby. As Kirkeby passes Fran, he slaps her behind with his folded newspaper. Fran jumps slightly.

FRAN (CONT'D)
(all in the day's work)
And watch your hand, Mr. Kirkeby!

CONTINUED: (2)

KIRKEBY
(innocently)
I beg your pardon?

FRAN
One of these days I'm going to shut those doors on you and --

She withdraws her hand into the sleeve of her uniform, and waves the "amputated" arm at him.

FRAN (CONT'D)
Twenty next.

The doors close.

INT. NINETEENTH FLOOR - DAY

Kirkeby turns away from the elevator, and grinning smugly, falls in beside Bud.

KIRKEBY
That Kubelik -- boy! Would I like to get her on a slow elevator to China.

BUD
Oh, yes. She's the best operator in the building.

KIRKEBY
I'm a pretty good operator myself -- but she just won't give me a tumble -- date-wise.

BUD
Maybe you're using the wrong approach.

KIRKEBY
A lot of guys around here have tried it -- all kinds of approaches -- no dice. What is she trying to prove?

BUD
Could be she's just a nice, respectable girl -- there are millions of them.

KIRKEBY
Listen to him. Little Lord Fauntleroy!

CONTINUED:

Leaving Bud at the employees' coat-racks, Kirkeby heads toward his office, one of the glass-enclosed cubicles. Bud hangs up his hat and raincoat, stows away the gloves and muffler.

Out of his coat pocket he takes a plastic anti- histamine sprayer and a box of cough drops, and still carrying the Kleenex, threads his way to his desk. Most of the desks are already occupied, and the others are filling rapidly. Once seated at his desk, Bud arranges his medicaments neatly in front of him.

He takes a Kleenex out of the box, blows his nose, then leaning back in his swivel chair sprays first one nostril, then the other. Suddenly the piercing bell goes off -- the workday has begun.

Being the ultra-conscientious type, Bud instantly sits upright in his chair, removes the cover from his computing machine, picks up a batch of perforated premium cards, starts entering figures on his computer. After a few seconds, he glances around to make sure that everybody in the vicinity is busy. Then he looks up a number in the company telephone directory, dials furtively.

BUD
(cupping hand over phone mouthpiece)
Hello, Mr. Dobisch? This is Baxter, on the nineteenth floor.

INT. DOBISCH'S OFFICE - DAY

It is a glass-enclosed cubicle on the twenty-first floor. Through the glass we see another enormous layout of desks, everybody working away. Dobisch is holding the phone in one hand, running an electric shaver over his face with the other.

DOBISCH
Oh, Buddy-boy. I was just about to call you.
(shuts off electric shaver)
I'm sorry about that mess on the living room wall. You see, my little friend, she kept insisting Picasso was a bum -- so she started to do that mural -- but I'm sure it will wash off -- just eyebrow pencil.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
It's not Picasso I'm calling about. It's the key -- to my apartment -- you were supposed to leave it under the mat.

DOBISCH - ON PHONE

DOBISCH
I did, didn't I? I distinctly remember bending over and putting it there --

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Oh, I found a key there, all right -- only it's the wrong key.

DOBISCH - ON PHONE

DOBISCH
It is?
(takes Bud's key out of his pocket)
Well, how about that? No wonder I couldn't get into the executive washroom this morning.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
And I couldn't get into my apartment -- so at four a. m. I had to wake up the landlady and give her a whole song and dance about going out to mail a letter and the door slamming shut.

DOBISCH - ON PHONE

DOBISCH
That's a shame. I'll send the key right down. And about your promotion --
(leafs through report on desk)
-- I'm sending that efficiency report right up to Mr. Sheldrake, in Personnel.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

DOBISCH (CONT'D)
I wouldn't be surprised if you heard from him before the day is over.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Thank you, Mr. Dobisch.

He hangs up, feels his forehead. It is warm. Clipped to his handkerchief pocket are a black fountain pen and, next to it, a thermometer in a black case. Bud unclips the thermometer case, unscrews the cap, shakes the thermometer out, puts it under his tongue. He resumes work.

A messenger comes up to his desk with an interoffice envelope.

MESSENGER
From Mr. Dobisch.

BUD
(thermometer in mouth)
Wait.

He turns away from the messenger, unties the string of the envelope, takes his key out, puts it in a coat pocket. From a trouser pocket, he extracts Dobisch's key to the executive washroom, slips it discreetly into the envelope, reties it, hands it to the messenger.

BUD (CONT'D)
(thermometer in mouth)
To Mr. Dobisch.

Puzzled by the whole procedure, the messenger leaves. Bud now removes the thermometer from his mouth, reads it. It's worse than he thought. He puts the thermometer back in the case, clips it to his pocket, takes his desk calendar out of a drawer, turns a leaf.

Under the date WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4 there is an entry in his handwriting -- MR. VANDERHOF. Bud consults the telephone directory again, picks up the phone, dials.

INT. VANDERHOF'S OFFICE - DAY

This is another glass-enclosed cubicle on another floor. MR. VANDERHOF, a Junior Chamber of Commerce type, is dictating to an elderly secretary who sits across the desk from him.

CONTINUED:

VANDERHOF
Dear Mr. MacIntosh --
(phone rings and he picks it up)
Vanderhof, Public Relations. Oh, yes, Baxter. Just a minute.
(to secretary)
All right, Miss Finch -- type up what we got so far.
(he waits till she is out of the office; then, into phone)
Now what is it, Baxter?

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Look, Mr. Vanderhof -- I've got you down here for tonight -- but I'm going to be using the place myself -- so I'll have to cancel.

VANDERHOF - ON PHONE

VANDERHOF
Cancel? But it's her birthday -- I already ordered the cake --

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
I hate to disappoint you -- I mean, many happy returns -- but not tonight --

VANDERHOF - ON PHONE

VANDERHOF
That's not like you, Baxter. Just the other day, at the staff meeting, I was telling Mr. Sheldrake what a reliable man you were.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Thank you, Mr. Vanderhof. But I'm sick -- I have this terrible cold -- and a fever -- and I got to go to bed right after work.

VANDERHOF - ON PHONE

VANDERHOF
Buddy-boy, that's the worst thing you can do. If you got a cold, you should go to a Turkish bath -- spend the night there -- sweat it out --

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Oh, no. I'd get pneumonia -- and if I got pneumonia, I'd be in bed for a month -- and if I were in bed for a month --

VANDERHOF - ON PHONE

VANDERHOF
Okay, you made your point. We'll just have to do it next Wednesday -- that's the only night of the week I can get away.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Wednesday -- Wednesday --
(leafing through calendar)
I got somebody penciled in -- let me see what I can do -- I'll get back to you.

He hangs up, riffles through the directory, finds the number, and with a furtive look around, dials again.

BUD (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Mr. Eichelberger? Is this Mortgage and Loan? I'd like to speak to Mr. Eichelberger. Yes, it is urgent.

INT. EICHELBERGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Also glass-enclosed, but slightly larger than the others. MR. EICHELBERGER, a solid citizen of about fifty, is displaying some mortgage graphs to three associates. A fourth one has answered the phone.

CONTINUED:

ASSOCIATE
(holding out phone to Eichelberger)
For you, Mel.

Eichelberger puts the charts down, takes the phone.

EIGHELBERGER
Eichelberger here -- oh, yes, Baxter --
(a glance at his associates; then continues, as though it were a business call)
What's your problem? -- Wednesday is out? -- oh -- that throws a little monkey wrench into my agenda -- Thursday? No, I'm all tied up on Thursday -- let's schedule that meeting for Friday.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Friday?
(checks calendar)
Let me see what I can do. I'll get back to you.

He hangs up, consults the directory, starts to dial a number.

INT. KIRKEBY'S OFFICE - DAY

It's another of those glass-enclosed cubicles, on the nineteenth floor. Kirkeby is talking into a dictaphone.

KIRKEBY
Premium-wise and billing-wise, we are eighteen percent ahead of last year, October-wise.

The phone has been ringing. Kirkeby switches off the machine, picks up the phone.

KIRKEBY (CONT'D)
Hello? Yeah, Baxter. What's up?

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Instead of Friday -- could you possibly switch to Thursday? You'd be doing me a great favor --

KIRKEBY - ON PHONE

KIRKEBY
Well -- it's all right with me, Bud. Let me check. I'll get back to you.

He presses down the button on the cradle, dials Operator.

INT. SWITCHBOARD ROOM

There is a double switchboard in the center, with nine girls on each side, all busy as beavers. In the foreground we recognize Sylvia, Kirkeby's date of last night.

SYLVIA
Consolidated Life -- I'll connect you -- Consolidated Life --

The girl next to her turns and holds out a line.

SWITCHBOARD GIRL
Sylvia -- it's for you.

Sylvia plugs the call into her own switchboard.

SYLVIA
Yes? Oh, hello -- sure I got home all right -- you owe me forty-five cents.

KIRKEBY - ON PHONE

KIRKEBY
Okay, okay. Look, Sylvia -- instead of Friday - could we make it Thursday night?

SYLVIA - AT SWITCHBOARD

SYLVIA
Thursday? That's The Untouchables -- with Bob Stack.

KIRKEBY - ON PHONE

KIRKEBY
Bob WHO? -- all right, so we'll watch it at the apartment. Big deal.
(he hangs up, dials)
Baxter? It's okay for Thursday.

INT. NINETEENTH FLOOR - DAY

Bud, at his desk, is on the phone.

BUD
Thank you, Mr. Kirkeby.
(hangs up, consults directory, dials)
Mr. Eichelberger? It's okay for Friday.
(hangs up, consults directory, dials)
Mr. Vanderhof? It's okay for Wednesday.

During this, the phone has rung at the next desk, and the occupant, MR. MOFFETT, has picked it up. As Bud hangs up --

MOFFETT
(into phone)
All right -- I'll tell him.
(hangs up, turns to Bud)
Hey, Baxter -- that was Personnel. Mr. Sheldrake's secretary.

BUD
Sheldrake?

MOFFETT
She's been trying to reach you for the last twenty minutes. They want you up stairs.

BUD
Oh!

He jumps up, stuffs the nose-spray into one pocket, a handful of Kleenex into the other.

MOFFETT
What gives, Baxter? You getting promoted or getting fired?

BUD
(cockily)
Care to make a small wager?

MOFFETT
I've been here twice as long as you have --

BUD
Shall we say -- a dollar?

CONTINUED:

MOFFETT
It's a bet.

Bud snake-hips between the desks like a broken-field runner. At the elevator, Bud presses the UP button, paces nervously. One of the elevator doors opens, and as Bud starts inside, the doors of the adjoining elevator open, and Fran Kubelik sticks her head out.

FRAN
Going up?

Hearing her voice, Bud throws a quick "Excuse me" to the other operator, exits quickly and steps into Fran's elevator.

BUD
Twenty-seven, please. And drive carefully. You're carrying precious cargo -- I mean, manpower-wise.

Fran shuts the doors.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Fran presses a button, and the elevator starts up.

FRAN
Twenty-seven.

BUD
You may not realize it, Miss Kubelik, but I'm in the top ten -- efficiency-wise and this may be the day -- promotion-wise.

FRAN
You're beginning to sound like Mr. Kirkeby already.

BUD
Why not? Now that they're kicking me upstairs --

FRAN
Couldn't happen to a nicer guy.
(Bud beams)
You know, you're the only one around here who ever takes his hat off in the elevator.

BUD
Really?

CONTINUED:

FRAN
The characters you meet. Something happens to men in elevators. Must be the change of altitude -- the blood rushes to their head, or something -- boy, I could tell you stories --

BUD
I'd love to hear them. Maybe we could have lunch in the cafeteria sometime -- or some evening, after work --

The elevator has stopped, and Fran opens the doors.

FRAN
Twenty-seven.

INT. TWENTY-SEVENTH FLOOR FOYER - DAY

It is pretty plush up here -- soft carpeting and tall mahogany doors leading to the executive offices. The elevator door is open, and Bud steps out.

FRAN
I hope everything goes all right.

BUD
I hope so.
(turning back)
Wouldn't you know they'd call me on a day like this -- with my cold and everything --
(fumbling with his tie)
How do I look?

FRAN
Fine.
(stepping out of elevator)
Wait.

She takes the carnation out of her lapel, starts to put it in Bud's buttonhole.

BUD
Thank you. That's the first thing I ever noticed about you -- when you were still on the local elevator -- you always wore a flower --

The elevator buzzer is now sounding insistently. Fran steps back inside.

CONTINUED:

FRAN
Good luck. And wipe your nose.

She shuts the doors. Bud looks after her, then takes a Kleenex out of his pocket, and wiping his nose, crosses to a glass door marked J. D. SHELDRAKE, DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL. He stashes the used Kleenex away in another pocket, enters.

INT. SHELDRAKE'S ANTEROOM - DAY

It is a sedate office with a secretary and a couple of typists. The secretary's name is MISS OLSEN. She is in her thirties, flaxen- haired, handsome, wears harlequin glasses, and has an incisive manner. Bud comes up to her desk.

BUD
C. C. Baxter -- Ordinary Premium Accounting -- Mr. Sheldrake called me.

MISS OLSEN
I called you -- that is, I tried to call you -- for twenty minutes.

BUD
I'm sorry, I --

MISS OLSEN
Go on in.

She indicates the door leading to the inner office. Bud squares his shoulders and starts in.

INT. SHELDRAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Sheldrake is a $14,000 a year man, and rates a four-window office. It is not quite an executive suite, but it is several pegs above the glass cubicles of the middle echelon. There is lots of leather, and a large desk behind which sits MR. SHELDRAKE.

He is a substantial looking, authoritative man in his middle forties, a pillar of his suburban community, a blood donor and a family man. The latter is attested to by a framed photograph showing two boys, aged 8 and 10, in military school uniforms. As Baxter comes through the door, Sheldrake is leafing through Dobisch's efficiency report. He looks up at Bud through a pair of heavy-rimmed reading glasses.

SHELDRAKE
Baxter?

CONTINUED:

BUD
Yes, sir.

SHELDRAKE
(studying him)
I was sort of wondering what you looked like. Sit down.

BUD
Yes, Mr. Sheldrake.

He seats himself on the very edge of the leather armchair facing Sheldrake.

SHELDRAKE
Been hearing some very nice things about you -- here's a report from Mr. Dobisch -- loyal, cooperative, resourceful --

BUD
Mr. Dobisch said that?

SHELDRAKE
And Mr. Kirkeby tells me that several nights a week you work late at the office -- without overtime.

BUD
(modestly)
Well, you know how it is -- things pile up.

SHELDRAKE
Mr. Vanderhof, in Public Relations, and Mr. Eichelberger, in Mortgage and Loan -- they'd both like to have you transferred to their departments.

BUD
That's very flattering.

Sheldrake puts the report down, takes off his glasses, leans across the desk toward Bud.

SHELDRAKE
Tell me, Baxter -- just what is it that makes you so popular?

BUD
I don't know.

CONTINUED: (2)

SHELDRAKE
Think.

Bud does so. For a moment, he is a picture of intense concentration. Then --

BUD
Would you mind repeating the question?

SHELDRAKE
Look, Baxter, I'm not stupid. I know everything that goes on in this building -- in every department -- on every floor -- every day of the year.

BUD
(in a very small voice)
You do?

SHELDRAKE
(rises, starts pacing)
In 1957, we had an employee here, name of Fowler. He was very popular, too. Turned out he was running a bookie joint right in the Actuarial Department tying up the switchboard, figuring the odds on our I.B.M. machines -- so the day before the Kentucky Derby, I called in the Vice Squad and we raided the thirteenth floor.

BUD
(worried)
The Vice Squad?

SHELDRAKE
That's right, Baxter.

BUD
What -- what's that got to do with me? I'm not running any bookie joint.

SHELDRAKE
What kind of joint are you running?

BUD
Sir?

CONTINUED: (3)

SHELDRAKE
There's a certain key floating around the office -- from Kirkeby to Vanderhof to Eichelberger to Dobisch -- it's the key to a certain apartment -- and you know who that apartment belongs to?

BUD
Who?

SHELDRAKE
Loyal, cooperative, resourceful C. C. Baxter.

BUD
Oh.

SHELDRAKE
Are you going to deny it?

BUD
No, sir. I'm not going to deny it. But if you'd just let me explain --

SHELDRAKE
You better.

BUD
(a deep breath)
Well, about six months ago -- I was going to night school, taking this course in Advanced Accounting -- and one of the guys in our department -- he lives in Jersey -- he was going to a banquet at the Biltmore -- his wife was meeting him in town, and he needed someplace to change into a tuxedo -- so I gave him the key and word must have gotten around -- because the next thing I knew, all sorts of guys were suddenly going to banquets -- and when you give the key to one guy, you can't say no to another and the whole thing got out of hand -- pardon me.

He whips out the nasal-spray, administers a couple of quick squirts up each nostril.

CONTINUED: (4)

SHELDRAKE
Baxter, an insurance company is founded on public trust. Any employee who conducts himself in a manner unbecoming --
(shifting into a new gear)
How many charter members are there in this little club of yours?

BUD
Just those four -- out of a total of 31,259 -- so actually, we can be very proud of our personnel -- percentage-wise.

SHELDRAKE
That's not the point. Four rotten apples in a barrel -- no matter how large the barrel -- you realize that if this ever leaked out --

BUD
Oh, it won't. Believe me. And it's not going to happen again. From now on, nobody is going to use my apartment --

In his vehemence he squeezes the spray bottle, which squirts all over the desk.

SHELDRAKE
Where is your apartment?

BUD
West 67th Street. You have no idea what I've been going through -- with the neighbors and the landlady and the liquor and the key --

SHELDRAKE
How do you work it with the key?

BUD
Well, usually I slip it to them in the office and they leave it under the mat -- but never again -- I can promise you that --

The phone buzzer sounds, and Sheldrake picks up the phone.

SHELDRAKE
Yes, Miss Olsen.

INT. SHELDRAKE'S ANTEROOM - DAY

Miss Olsen is on the phone.

MISS OLSEN
Mrs. Sheldrake returning your call -
- on two --

She presses a button down, starts to hang the phone up, glances around to see if the typists are watching, then raises the receiver to her ear and eavesdrops on the conversation.

INT. SHELDRAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheldrake is talking into the phone.

SHELDRAKE
Yes, dear -- I called you earlier --
where were you? Oh, you took Tommy
to the dentist --

During this, Bud has risen from his chair, started inching toward the door.

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
(turning to him)
Where are you going, Baxter?

BUD
Well, I don't want to intrude --
and I thought -- since it's all
straightened out anyway --

SHELDRAKE
I'm not through with you yet.

BUD
Yes, sir.

SHELDRAKE
(into phone)
The reason I called is -- I won't
be home for dinner tonight. The
branch manager from Kansas City is
in town -- I'm taking him to the
theatre Music Man, what else? No,
don't wait up for me -- 'bye,
darling.
(hangs up, turns to Bud)
Tell me something, Baxter -- have
you seen Music Man?

CONTINUED:

BUD
Not yet. But I hear it's one swell show.

SHELDRAKE
How would you like to go tonight?

BUD
You mean -- you and me? I thought you were taking the branch manager from Kansas City --

SHELDRAKE
I made other plans. You can have both tickets.

BUD
Well, that's very kind of you -- only I'm not feeling well -- you see, I have this cold -- and I thought I'd go straight home.

SHELDRAKE
Baxter, you're not reading me. I told you I have plans.

BUD
So do I -- I'm going to take four aspirins and get into bed -- so you better give the tickets to somebody else --

SHELDRAKE
I'm not just giving those tickets, Baxter -- I want to swap them.

BUD
Swap them? For what?

Sheldrake picks up the Dobisch reports, puts on his glasses, turns a page.

SHELDRAKE
It also says here -- that you are alert, astute, and quite imaginative --

BUD
Oh?
(the dawn is breaking)
Oh!

CONTINUED: (2)

He reaches into his coat pocket, fishes out a handful of Kleenex, and then finally the key to his apartment. He holds it up.

BUD (CONT'D)
This?

SHELDRAKE
That's good thinking, Baxter. Next month there's going to be a shift in personnel around here -- and as far as I'm concerned, you're executive material.

BUD
I am?

SHELDRAKE
Now put down the key --
(pushing a pad toward him)
-- and put down the address.

Bud lays the key on the desk, unclips what he thinks is his fountain pen, uncaps it, starts writing on the pad.

BUD
It's on the second floor - my name is not on the door -- it just says -

Suddenly he realizes that he has been trying to write the address with the thermometer.

BUD (CONT'D)
Oh -- terribly sorry. It's that cold --

SHELDRAKE
Relax, Baxter.

BUD
Thank you, sir.

He has replaced the thermometer with the fountain pen, and is scribbling the address.

BUD (CONT'D)
You'll be careful with the record player, won't you? And about the liquor -- I ordered some this morning -- but I'm not sure when they'll deliver it --

CONTINUED: (3)

He has finished writing the address, shoves the pad over to Sheldrake.

SHELDRAKE
Now remember, Baxter -- this is going to be our little secret.

BUD
Yes, of course.

SHELDRAKE
You know how people talk.

BUD
Oh, you don't have to worry --

SHELDRAKE
Not that I have anything to hide.

BUD
Oh, no sir. Certainly not. Anyway, it's none of my business -- four apples, five apples -- what's the difference -- percentage-wise?

SHELDRAKE
(holding out the tickets)
Here you are, Baxter. Have a nice time.

BUD
You too, sir.

Clutching the tickets, he backs out of the office.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOBBY INSURANCE BUILDING - EVENING

It is about 6:30, and the building has pretty well emptied out by now. Bud, in raincoat and hat, is leaning against one of the marble pillars beyond the elevators. His raincoat is unbuttoned, and Fran's carnation is still in his lapel. He is looking off expectantly toward a door marked EMPLOYEES'

LOUNGE - WOMEN.

Some of the female employees are emerging, dressed for the street. Among them are Sylvia and her colleague from the switchboard.

CONTINUED:

SYLVIA
So I figure, a man in his position, he's going to take me to 21 and El Morocco -- instead, he takes me to Hamburg Heaven and some schnook's apartment --

They pass Bud without paying any attention to him. Bud has heard the crack, and looks after Sylvia, a little hurt. Then he glances back toward the door of the lounge, as it opens and Fran Kubelik comes out. She is wearing a wool coat over a street dress, no hat.

FRAN
(passing Bud)
Good night.

BUD
(casually)
Good night.

She is about three paces beyond him when he suddenly realizes who it is.

BUD (CONT'D)
Oh -- Miss Kubelik.
(he rushes after her, taking off his hat)
I've been waiting for you.

FRAN
You have?

BUD
I almost didn't recognize you -- this is the first time I've ever seen you in civilian clothes.

FRAN
How'd you make out on the twenty-seventh floor?

BUD
Great. Look -- have you seen The Music Man?

FRAN
No.

BUD
Would you like to?

CONTINUED: (2)

FRAN
Sure.

BUD
I thought maybe we could have a bite to eat first -- and then --

FRAN
You mean tonight?

BUD
Yeah.

FRAN
I'm sorry, but I can't tonight. I'm meeting somebody.

BUD
Oh.
(a beat)
You mean -- like a girl-friend?

FRAN
No. Like a man.

She proceeds across the lobby toward the street entrance, Bud following her.

BUD
I wasn't trying to be personal -- it's just that the fellows in the office were -- whether you wondering about you ever --

FRAN
Just tell 'em -- now and then.

BUD
This date -- is it just a date -- or is it something serious?

FRAN
It used to be serious -- at least I was -- but he wasn't -- so the whole thing is more or less kaputt.

BUD
Well, in that case, couldn't you?

FRAN
I'm afraid not. I promised to have a drink with him -- he's been calling me all week --

CONTINUED: (3)

BUD
Oh, I understand.

He follows her out through the revolving doors.

EXT. INSURANCE BUILDING - EVENING

Fran and Bud come out.

BUD
(putting his hat on)
Well, it was just an idea -- I hate to see a ticket go to waste --

FRAN
(stops)
What time does the show go on?

BUD
Eight-thirty.

FRAN
(looks at her watch)
Well -- I could meet you at the theatre -- if that's all right.

BUD
All right? That's wonderful! It's the Majestic -- 44th Street.

FRAN
Meet you in the lobby. Okay?

Bud nods happily, falls in beside her as she starts down the street.

BUD
You know, I felt so lousy this morning -- a hundred and one fever -- then my promotion came up -- now you and I -- eleventh row center -- and you said I should have stayed in bed.

FRAN
How is your cold?

BUD
(high as a kite)
What cold? And after the show, we could go out on the town --
(does a little cha cha step)
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BUD (CONT'D)
I've been taking from Arthur Murray.

FRAN
So I see.

BUD
They got a great little band at El Chico, in the Village -- it's practically around the corner from where you live.

FRAN
Sounds good.
(a sudden thought)
How do you know where I live?

BUD
Oh, I even know who you live with -- your sister and brother-in-law -- I know when you were born -- and where -- I know all sorts of things about you.

FRAN
How come?

BUD
A couple of months ago I looked up your card in the group insurance file.

FRAN
Oh.

BUD
I know your height, your weight and your Social Security number -- you had mumps, you had measles, and you had your appendix out.

They have now reached the corner, and Fran stops.

FRAN
Well, don't tell the fellows in the office about the appendix. They may get the wrong idea how you found out.
(turning the corner)
'Bye.

CONTINUED: (2)

BUD
(calling after her)
Eight-thirty!

He watches her walk away, an idiot grin on his face. Despite what he told Fran, his nose is stuffed up, so he takes out the anti-histamine and sprays his nostrils. Then, carried away, he squirts some of the stuff on the carnation in his buttonhole, moves off in the opposite direction.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - EVENING

Fran comes hurrying along the street. She is late. Her objective is a small Chinese restaurant, with a neon sign reading THE RICKSHAW - COCKTAILS - CANTONESE FOOD. She starts down a flight of steps leading to the entrance.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - EVENING

The bar is a long, narrow, dimly-lit room with booths along one side. Beyond a bamboo curtain is the main dining room, which does not concern us. The place is decorated in Early Beachcomber style rattan, fish-nets, conch-shells, etc. The help is Chinese.

At this early hour, there are only half a dozen customers in the place -- all at the bar except for one man, sitting in the last booth with his back toward camera. At a piano, a Chinese member of Local 808 is improvising mood music.

Fran comes through the door, and without looking around, heads straight for the last booth. The bartender nods to her -- they know her there. As she passes the piano player, he gives her a big smile, segues into JEALOUS LOVER. Fran comes up to the man sitting in the last booth.

FRAN
(a wistful smile)
Good evening, Mr. Sheldrake.
Sheldrake, for that's who it is, looks around nervously to make sure no one has heard her.

SHELDRAKE
Please, Fran -- not so loud.
(he gets up)

FRAN
Still afraid somebody may see us together?

CONTINUED:

SHELDRAKE
(reaching for her coat)
Let me take that.

FRAN
No, Jeff. I can't stay very long.
(sits opposite him, with her coat on)
Can I have a frozen daiquiri?

SHELDRAKE
It's on the way.
(sits down)
I see you went ahead and cut your hair.

FRAN
That's right.

SHELDRAKE
You know I liked it better long.

FRAN
Yes, I know. You want a lock to carry in your wallet?

A waiter comes up with a tray: two daiquiris, fried shrimp, eggrolls, and a bowl of sauce.

WAITER
(showing all his teeth)
Evening, lady. Nice see you again.

FRAN
Thank you.

The waiter has set everything on the table, leaves.

SHELDRAKE
How long has it been -- a month?

FRAN
Six weeks. But who's counting?

SHELDRAKE
I missed you, Fran.

FRAN
Like old times. Same booth, same song --

SHELDRAKE
It's been hell.

CONTINUED: (2)

FRAN
(dipping shrimp)
-- same sauce -- sweet and sour.

SHELDRAKE
You don't know what it's like -- standing next to you in that elevator, day after day -- Good morning, Miss Kubelik -- Good night, Mr. Sheldrake -- I'm still crazy about you, Fran.

FRAN
(avoiding his eyes)
Let's not start on that again, Jeff -- please. I'm just beginning to get over it.

SHELDRAKE
I don't believe you.

FRAN
Look, Jeff -- we had two wonderful months this summer -- and that was it. Happens all the time -- the wife and kids go away to the country, and the boss has a fling with the secretary or the manicurist -- or the elevator girl. Comes September, the picnic is over -- goodbye. The kids go back to school, the boss goes back to the wife, and the girl --
(she is barely able to control herself)
They don't make these shrimp like they used to.

SHELDRAKE
I never said goodbye, Fran.

FRAN
(not listening)
For a while there, you try kidding yourself that you're going with an unmarried man. Then one day he keeps looking at his watch, and asks you if there's any lipstick showing, then rushes off to catch the seven-fourteen to White Plains.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRAN (CONT'D)
So you fix yourself a cup of instant coffee -- and you sit there by yourself -- and you think -- and it all begins to look so ugly --

There are tears in her eyes. She breaks off, downs what's left of the daiquiri.

SHELDRAKE
How do you think I felt -- riding home on that seven-fourteen train?

FRAN
Why do you keep calling me, Jeff? What do you want from me?

SHELDRAKE
(taking her hand)
I want you back, Fran.

FRAN
(withdrawing her hand)
Sorry, Mr. Sheldrake -- I'm full up. You'll have to take the next elevator.

SHELDRAKE
You're not giving me a chance, Fran. I asked you to meet me because -- I have something to tell you.

FRAN
Go ahead -- tell me.

SHELDRAKE
(a glance around)
Not here, Fran. Can't we go some place else?

FRAN
No. I have a date at eight-thirty.

SHELDRAKE
Important?

FRAN
Not very -- but I'm going to be there anyway.

CONTINUED: (4)

She takes out an inexpensive square compact with a fleur de lis pattern on it, opens it, starts to fix her face. The waiter comes up with a couple of menus.

WAITER
You ready order dinner now?

FRAN
No. No dinner.

SHELDRAKE
Bring us two more drinks.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAJESTIC THEATRE - EVENING

It is 8:25, and there is the usual hectic to-do -- taxis pulling up, people milling around the sidewalk and crowding into the lobby. In the middle of this melee, buffeted by the throng, stands Bud, in raincoat and hat, looking anxiously for Fran.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - EVENING

Fran and Sheldrake, in the booth, are working on the second round of drinks.

SHELDRAKE
Fran -- remember that last weekend we had?

FRAN
(wryly)
Do I. That leaky little boat you rented -- and me in a black negligee and a life preserver --

SHELDRAKE
Remember what we talked about?

FRAN
We talked about a lot of things.

SHELDRAKE
I mean -- about my getting a divorce.

FRAN
We didn't talk about it -- you did.

CONTINUED:

SHELDRAKE
You didn't really believe me, did you?

FRAN
(shrugging)
They got it an a long playing record now - Music to String Her Along By. My wife doesn't understand me -- We haven't gotten along for years -- You're the best thing that ever happened to me --

SHELDRAKE
That's enough, Fran.

FRAN
(going right on)
Just trust me, baby -- we'll work it out somehow --

SHELDRAKE
You're not being funny.

FRAN
I wasn't trying.

SHELDRAKE
If you'll just listen to me for a minute --

FRAN
Okay. I'm sorry.

SHELDRAKE
I saw my lawyer this morning -- I wanted his advice -- about the best way to handle it --

FRAN
Handle what?

SHELDRAKE
What do you think?

FRAN
(looking at him for a long moment - then)
Let's get something straight, Jeff -- I never asked you to leave your wife.

CONTINUED: (2)

SHELDRAKE
Of course not. You had nothing to do with it.

FRAN
(her eyes misting up again)
Are you sure that's what you want?

SHELDRAKE
I'm sure. If you'll just tell me that you still love me --

FRAN
(softly)
You know I do.

SHELDRAKE
Fran --

He takes her hand, kisses it. The bar has been filling up, and now two couples are seating themselves in a nearby booth. One of the women is Miss Olsen.

FRAN
(pulling her hand away gently)
Jeff -- darling --

She indicates the other customers. Sheldrake glances over his shoulder.

SHELDRAKE
It is crowding up. Let's get out of here.

They rise. Sheldrake leaves some money on the table, leads Fran toward the entrance. As they pass Miss Olsen's booth, she turns around slowly, and putting on her glasses, looks after them.

Sheldrake slips a bill to the piano player, who gives them a big smile, slides into JEALOUS LOVER again. Retrieving his hat and coat from the checkroom girl, Sheldrake steers Fran through the door. Miss Olsen watches them with a cold smile.

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - EVENING

Fran and Sheldrake come up the steps.

SHELDRAKE
(to a passing cab)
Taxi!

CONTINUED:

It passes without stopping.

FRAN
I have that date -- remember?

SHELDRAKE
I love you -- remember?

Another taxi approaches. Sheldrake gives a shrill whistle, and it pulls up. He opens the door.

FRAN
Where are we going, Jeff? Not back to that leaky boat --

SHELDRAKE
I promise.

He helps her into the cab, takes out of his coat pocket the page from the pad on which Bud wrote the address of the apartment.

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
(to cab driver)
West Sixty-Seventh.

He gets in beside Fran, shuts the door. As the cab pulls away, through the rear window the two can be seen kissing.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAJESTIC THEATRE - EVENING

It's 9 o'clock, the lobby is deserted, and standing on the sidewalk all by himself, is Bud. He takes a Kleenex out of his pocket, blows his nose, stuffs the used Kleenex in another pocket. He looks up and down the street, consults his watch, decides to wait just a little longer.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

BAXTER'S DESK CALENDAR

The leaves are flipping over. Mr. Sheldrake seems to be using The Apartment regularly -- for the name Sheldrake, in Bud's handwriting, appears on the pages dated Monday, November 9, Thursday, November 12, Thursday, November 19, Monday, November 23, and Monday, November 30.

CONTINUED:

Mr. Sheldrake also seems to be Baxter's only customer by now, since the other leaves of the calendar are blank.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NINETEENTH FLOOR - INSURANCE BUILDING - DAY

It is a gloomy December morning, and hundreds of desk-bound employees are bent over their paper-work. Bud Baxter, in raincoat and hat, is clearing out his desk. He has piled everything on his blotter pad -- reference books, papers, a fountain pen set, pencils, paper clips and the calendar. Watching him from the next desk is a dumbfounded Moffett.

Bud picks up the blotter pad with his stuff on it, and as he moves past Moffett's desk, Moffett takes out a dollar bill, drops it grudgingly on the loaded pad. Bud flashes him a little grin, continues between the desks toward the row of glass-enclosed offices housing the supervisory personnel.

He comes up to an unoccupied cubicle. A sign painter is brushing in some new lettering on the glass door -- it reads C. C. BAXTER, Second Administrative Assistant. Bud studies the sign with a good deal of satisfaction.

BUD
(to painter)
Would you mind --?
(the painter turns around)
C. C. Baxter -- that's me.

With an "Oh, " the painter opens the door for him.

INT. BAXTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Bud enters his new office, deposits his stuff on the bare desk, looks around possessively. The small cubicle boasts one window, carpeting on the floor, a filing cabinet, a couple of synthetic-leather chairs, and a clothes-tree -- to Bud, it is the Taj Mahal. He crosses to the clothes-tree, removes his hat and coat, hangs them up. From OFF comes --

KIRKEBY'S VOICE
Hi, Buddy-boy.

DOBISCH'S VOICE
Congratulations, and all that jazz.

Bud turns. Kirkeby, Dobisch, Eichelberger and Vanderhof have come into the office.

BUD
Hi, fellas.

CONTINUED:

EICHELBERGER
Well, you made it, kid -- just like we promised.

VANDERHOF
Quite an office -- name on the door -- rug on the floor -- the whole schmear.

BUD
Yeah.

DOBISCH
Teamwork -- that's what counts in an organization like this. All for one and one for all -- know what I mean?

BUD
I have a vague idea.

Kirkeby signals to Vanderhof, who shuts the door. The four charter members of the club start closing in on Bud.

KIRKEBY
Baxter, we're a little disappointed in you -- gratitude-wise.

BUD
Oh, I'm very grateful.

EIGHELBERGER
Then why are you locking us out, all of a sudden?

BUD
It's been sort of rough these last few weeks -- what with my cold and like that --

He has picked up the desk calendar, shoves it discreetly into one of the drawers.

DOBISCH
We went to bat for you -- and now you won't play ball with us.

BUD
Well, after all, it's my apartment -- it's private property -- it's not a public playground.

CONTINUED: (2)

VANDERHOF
All right, so you got yourself a girl -- that's okay with us -- but not every night of the week.

KIRKEBY
How selfish can you get?
(to the others)
Last week I had to borrow my nephew's car and take Sylvia to a drive-in in Jersey. I'm too old for that sort of thing -- I mean, in a Volkswagen.

BUD
I sympathize with your problem -- and believe me, I'm very sorry --

DOBISCH
You'll be a lot sorrier before we're through with you.

BUD
You threatening me?

DOBISCH
Listen, Baxter, we made you and we can break you.

He deliberately flips a cigar ash on Bud's desk. At the same time, the door opens, and Sheldrake comes striding in briskly.

BUD
Good morning, Mr. Sheldrake.

The others swivel around.

SHELDRAKE
Morning, gentlemen.
(to Bud)
Everything satisfactory? You like your office?

BUD
Oh, yes, sir. Very much. And I want to thank you --

SHELDRAKE
Don't thank me -- thank your friends here -- they're the ones who recommended you.

CONTINUED: (3)

The four friends manage to work up some sickly smiles.

DOBISCH
We just dropped in to wish him the best.

Dorbisch quickly brushes cigar ash off desk

KIRKEBY
(as they move toward the door)
So long, Baxter. We know you won't let us down.

BUD
So long, fellas. Drop in any time. The door is always open -- to my office.

They leave. Sheldrake and Bud are alone.

SHELDRAKE
I like the way you handled that. Well, how does it feel to be an executive?

BUD
Fine. And I want you to know I'll work very hard to justify your confidence in me --

SHELDRAKE
Sure you will.
(a beat)
Say, Baxter, about the apartment - now that you got a raise, don't you think we can afford a second key?

BUD
Well -- I guess so.

SHELDRAKE
You know my secretary -- Miss Olsen --

BUD
Oh, yes. Very attractive. Is she -- the lucky one?

CONTINUED: (4)

SHELDRAKE
No, you don't understand. She's a busybody -- always poking her nose into things -- and with that key passing back and forth -- why take chances?

BUD
Yes, sir. You can't be too careful.

He glances toward the glass partitions to make sure that nobody is watching.

BUD (CONT'D)
I have something here -- I think it belongs to you.

Out of his pocket he has slipped the compact with the fleur-de-lis pattern we saw Fran use at the Rickshaw. He holds it out to Sheldrake.

SHELDRAKE
To me?

BUD
I mean -- the young lady -- whoever she may be -- it was on the couch when I got home last night.

SHELDRAKE
Oh, yes. Thanks.

BUD
The mirror is broken.
(opens compact, revealing crack in mirror)
It was broken when I found it.

SHELDRAKE
So it was.
(takes the compact)
She threw it at me.

BUD
Sir?

SHELDRAKE
You know how it is -- sooner or later they all give you a bad time.

BUD
(man-of-the-world)
I know how it is.

CONTINUED: (5)

SHELDRAKE
You see a girl a couple of times a week -- just for laughs -- and right away she thinks you're going to divorce your wife. I ask you -- is that fair?

BUD
No, sir. That's very unfair -- especially to your wife.

SHELDRAKE
Yeah.
(shifting gears)
You know, Baxter, I envy you. Bachelor -- all the dames you want -- no headaches, no complications --

BUD
Yes, sir. That's the life, all right.

SHELDRAKE
Put me down for Thursday again.

BUD
Roger. And I'll get that other key.

Sheldrake exits. Bud takes the calendar out of the desk drawer, makes an entry.

DISSOLVE TO:

BAXTER'S DESK CALENDAR

Again the leaves are flipping over, and again we see Sheldrake's name in Bud's handwriting -- booked for the following dates: Monday, December 14, Thursday, December 17, Monday, December 21, Thursday, December 24.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SWITCHBOARD ROOM - DAY

Perched on top of the switchboard is a small decorated Christmas tree, and the operators are dispensing holiday greetings to all callers.

OPERATORS
Consolidated Life -- Merry Christmas -- I'll connect you -- Consolidated Life -- Merry Christmas -- I'm ringing --

CONTINUED:

In the foreground, Sylvia is engaged in a private conversation of her own.

SYLVIA
(into mouthpiece)
Yeah? -- YEAH? -- Where? -- You bet --

She tears off her headset, and turns to the other girls.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Somebody watch my line -- there's a swinging party up on the nineteenth floor --

She scoots out the door. The other girls immediately abandon their posts, and dash after her.

INT. NINETEENTH FLOOR - DAY

It's a swinging party, all right. Nobody is working. Several desks have been cleared and pushed together, and on top of this improvised stage four female employees and Mr. Dobisch, with his pants-legs rolled up, are doing a Rockette kick routine to the tune of JINGLE BELLS.

Employees are ringed around the performers, some drinking out of paper cups, others singing and clapping in rhythm. One of the cubicles has been transformed into a bar, and it is jammed with people.

Mr. Kirkeby and Mr. Vanderhof are pouring -- each has a couple of bottles of liquor in his hands, and is emptying them into the open top of a water- cooler. But the stuff is flowing out as fast as it flows in -- everybody is in line with a paper cup waiting for a refill.

Bud comes shouldering his way out of the crowded cubicle, holding aloft two paper cups filled with booze. Since his promotion he has bought himself a new suit, dark flannel, and with it he wears a white shirt with a pinned round collar, and a foulard tie.

He also has quite a glow on. Detouring past necking couples, he heads in the direction of the elevators. The doors of Fran's elevator are just opening, and the switchboard operators, led by Sylvia, come streaming out.

SYLVIA
(to a colleague)
-- so I said to him: Never again! -- either get yourself a bigger car or a smaller girl --

CONTINUED:

As they head for the party, they pass Bud, who is approaching the elevator with the two drinks. Fran is just closing the elevator doors.

BUD
Miss Kubelik.

The doors slide open again, and Fran looks out. Instead of the customary carnation in the lapel of her uniform, she wears a sprig of holly.

BUD (CONT'D)
(holding out one of the drinks)
Marry Christmas.

FRAN
Thank you.
(takes drink)
I thought you were avoiding me.

BUD
What gave you that idea?

FRAN
In the last six weeks you've only been in my elevator once -- and then you didn't take your hat off.

BUD
Well, as a matter of fact, I was rather hurt when you stood me up that night --

FRAN
I don't blame you. It was unforgivable.

BUD
I forgive you.

FRAN
You shouldn't.

BUD
You couldn't help yourself. I mean, when you're having a drink with one man, you can't just suddenly walk out on him because you have another date with another man. You did the only decent thing.

CONTINUED: (2)

FRAN
Don't be too sure. Just because I wear a uniform -- that doesn't make me a Girl Scout.

BUD
Miss Kubelik, one doesn't get to be a second administrative assistant around here unless he's a pretty good judge of character -- and as far as I'm concerned, you're tops. I mean, decency-wise -- and otherwise-wise.
(toasting)
Cheers.

FRAN
Cheers.

They down their drinks. Bud takes the empty cup from her.

BUD
One more?

FRAN
(indicating elevator)
I shouldn't drink when I'm driving.

BUD
You're so right.

He reaches into the elevator, takes a cardboard sign off a hook, hangs it on the elevator door. It reads USE OTHER ELEVATOR.

BUD (CONT'D)
By the power vested in me, I herewith declare this elevator out of order.
(leading her toward the party)
Shall we join the natives?

FRAN
Why not?
(as they pass a kissing couple)
They seem friendly enough.

CONTINUED: (3)

BUD
Don't you believe it. Later on there will be human sacrifices -- white collar workers tossed into the computing machines, and punched full of those little square holes.

FRAN
How many of those drinks did you have?

BUD
(holding up four fingers)
Three.

FRAN
I thought so.

They have now reached the entrance to the bar, which is overflowing with thirsty natives.

BUD
You wait here. I think I hear the sound of running water.

He leaves her outside the cubicle, and elbows his way through the crowd toward the booze-filled water cooler. Out of another cubicle comes Miss Olsen, cup in hand. She too has had quite a few. Seeing Fran, she walks up to her, with an acid smile on her face.

MISS OLSEN
Hi. How's the branch manager from Kansas City?

FRAN
I beg your pardon?

MISS OLSEN
I'm Miss Olsen -- Mr. Sheldrake's secretary.

FRAN
Yes, I know.

MISS OLSEN
So you don't have to play innocent with me. He used to tell his wife that I was the branch manager from Seattle -- four years ago when we were having a little ring-a-ding-ding.

CONTINUED: (4)

FRAN
I don't know what you're talking about.

MISS OLSEN
And before me there was Miss Rossi in Auditing -- and after me there was Miss Koch in Disability -- and just before you there was Miss What's-Her-Name, on the twenty-fifth floor --

FRAN
(wanting to get away)
Will you excuse me?

MISS OLSEN
(holding her by the arm)
What for? You haven't done anything -- it's him -- what a salesman -- always the last booth in the Chinese restaurant -- and the same pitch about divorcing his wife -- and in the end you wind up with egg foo yong on your face.

Bud comes burrowing out of the crowded cubicle, balancing the two filled paper cups, spots Fran.

BUD
Miss Kubelik.

Fran turns away from Miss Olsen.

FRAN
Well -- thank you.

MISS OLSEN
Always happy to do something for our girls in uniform.

She moves off as Bud joins Fran, who is looking a little pale.

BUD
You all right? What's the matter?

FRAN
Nothing.
(takes the drink)
There are just too many people here.

CONTINUED: (5)

BUD
Why don't we step into any office? There's something I want your advice about, anyway.
(leads her toward his cubicle)
I have my own office now, naturally. And you may be interested to know I'm the second youngest executive in the company -- the only one younger is a grandson of the chairman of the board.

INT. BAXTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Bud ushers Fran in, and is confronted by a strange couple necking in the corner. He gestures them out, crosses to his desk.

BUD
Miss Kubelik, I would like your honest opinion. I've had this in my desk for a week -- cost me fifteen dollars -- but I just couldn't get up enough nerve to wear it --

From under the desk he has produced a hatbox, and out of the hatbox a black bowler, which he now puts on his head.

BUD (CONT'D)
It's what they call the junior executive model. What do you think?

Fran looks at him blankly, absorbed in her own thoughts.

BUD (CONT'D)
Guess I made a boo-boo, huh?

FRAN
(paying attention again)
No -- I like it.

BUD
Really? You mean you wouldn't be ashamed to be seen with somebody in a hat like this?

FRAN
Of course not.

BUD
Maybe if I wore it a little more to the side --
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BUD (CONT'D)
(adjusting hat)
is that better?

FRAN
Much better.

BUD
Well, as long as you wouldn't be ashamed to be seen with me -- how about the three of us going out this evening -- you and me and the bowler -- stroll down Fifth Avenue -- sort of break it in --

FRAN
This is a bad day for me.

BUD
I understand. Christmas -- family and all that --

FRAN
I'd better get back to my elevator. I don't want to be fired.

BUD
Oh, you don't have to worry about that. I have quite a bit of influence in Personnel. You know Mr. Sheldrake?

FRAN
(guardedly)
Why?

BUD
He and I are like this.
(crosses his fingers)
Sent me a Christmas card. See?

He has picked up a Christmas card from his desk, shows it to Fran. It is a photograph of the Sheldrake clan grouped around an elaborate Christmas tree -- Mr. and Mrs. Sheldrake, the two boys in military school uniforms, and a big French poodle.

Underneath it says: SEASON'S GREETINGS from the SHELDRAKES Emily, Jeff, Tommy, Jeff Jr., and Figaro.

FRAN
(studying the card ruefully)
Makes a cute picture.

CONTINUED: (2)

BUD
I thought maybe I could put in a word for you with Mr. Sheldrake -- get you a little promotion -- how would you like to be an elevator starter?

FRAN
I'm afraid there are too many other girls around here with seniority over me.

BUD
No problem. Why don't we discuss it sometime over the holidays -- I could call you and pick you up and we'll have the big unveiling --
(touching the brim of his bowler)
-- you sure this is the right way to wear it?

FRAN
I think so.

BUD
You don't think it's tilted a little too much --

Fran takes her compact out of her uniform pocket, opens it, hands it to Bud.

FRAN
Here.

BUD
(examining himself in the mirror)
After all, this is a conservative firm -- I don't want people to think I'm an entertainer --

His voice trails off. There is something familiar about the cracked mirror of the compact -- and the fleur-de-lis pattern on the case confirms his suspicion. Fran notices the peculiar expression on his face.

FRAN
What is it?

BUD
(with difficulty)
The mirror -- it's broken.

CONTINUED: (3)

FRAN
I know. I like it this way -- makes me look the way I feel.

The phone has started to ring. Bud doesn't hear it. He closes the compact, hands it to Fran.

FRAN (CONT'D)
Your phone.

BUD
Oh.
(picks up phone from desk)
Yes?
(throws a quick look at Fran)
Just a minute.
(covers mouthpiece; to Fran)
If you don't mind -- this is sort of personal

FRAN
All right. Have a nice Christmas.

She exits, closing the door. Bud takes his hand off the mouthpiece.

BUD
(every word hurts)
Yes, Mr. Sheldrake -- no, I didn't forget -- the tree is up and the Tom and Jerry mix is in the refrigerator -- yes, sir -- same to you.

He hangs up, stands there for a moment, the bowler still on his head, the noise from the party washing over him. He slowly crosses to the clothes-tree. picks up his coat -- a new, black chesterfield. With the coat over his arm, he starts out of the office.

INT. NINETEENTH FLOOR - DAY

The party has picked up tempo. On top of the desks, Sylvia is doing a mock strip tease -- without taking any clothes off. There is hollering, drinking and clapping all around her. Bud moves past the floor show, paying no attention. Kirkeby spots him, detaches himself from the cheering section around Sylvia.

CONTINUED:

KIRKEBY
Where you going, Buddy-boy? The party's just starting.
(catching up with him)
Listen, kid -- give me a break, will you -- how about tomorrow afternoon? I can't take her to that drive-in again -- the car doesn't even have a heater four o'clock -- okay?

Bud ignores him, continues walking through the ranks of empty desks.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHEAP BAR - COLUMBUS AVENUE IN THE SIXTIES - EVENING

It is six o'clock, and the joint is crowded with customers having one for the road before joining their families for Christmas Eve. There are men with gaily wrapped packages, small trussed-up Christmas trees, a plucked turkey in a plastic bag.

Written across the mirror behind the bar, in glittering white letters, is HAPPY HOLIDAYS. Everybody is in high spirits, laughing it up and toasting each other. Everybody except Bud Baxter.

He is standing at the bar in his chesterfield and bowler, slightly isolated, brooding over an almost empty martini glass. The bartender comes up, sets down a fresh martini with an olive on a toothpick, takes his payment from a pile of bills and coins lying in front of Bud.

Bud fishes out the olive, adds it to half a dozen other impaled olives neatly arranged in fan shape on the counter. He is obviously trying to complete the circle. A short, rotund man dressed as Santa Claus hurries in from the street, and comes up to the bar beside Bud.

SANTA CLAUS
(to bartender)
Hey, Charlie -- give me a shot of bourbon -- and step on it -- my sleigh is double parked.

He laughs uproariously at his own joke, nudges Bud with his elbow. Bud stares at him coldly, turns back to his martini. The laughter dies in Santa Claus' throat. He gets his short of bourbon, moves down the bar to find more convivial company.

CONTINUED:

Standing near the end of the curved bar is a girl in her middle twenties wearing a ratty fur coat. Her name is MARGIE MacDOUGALL, she is drinking a Rum Collins through a straw, and she too is alone. From a distance, she is studying Bud with interest.

On the bar in front of her is a container of straws in paper wrappers. She takes one of them out, tears off the end of the paper, blows through the straw -- sending the wrapper floating toward Bud.

The paper wrapper passes right in front of Bud's nose. He doesn't notice it. Margie, undaunted, lets go with another missile. This time the wrapper lands on the brim of Bud's bowler. No reaction. Another wrapper comes floating in, hits Bud's cheek.

He never takes his eye off his martini. Margie leaves her place, and carrying her handbag and her empty glass, comes up alongside Bud. Without a word, she reaches up and removes the wrapper from Bud's bowler.

MARGIE
You buy me a drink, I'll buy you some music.
(sets the glass down)
Rum Collins.

Not waiting for an answer, she heads for the juke box. Bud looks after her noncommittally, then turns to the bartender.

BUD
Rum Collins.
(indicating martini glass)
And another one of these little mothers.

At the juke box, Margie has dropped a coin in and made her selection. The music starts -- ADESTE FIDELIS. She rejoins Bud at the bar just as the bartender is putting down their drinks in front of them. Bud removes the new olive, adds it to the pattern on the counter in front of him. They both drink, staring straight ahead. For quite a while, there is complete silence between them.

MARGIE
(out of nowhere)
You like Castro?
(a blank look from Bud)
I mean -- how do you feel about Castro?

CONTINUED: (2)

BUD
What is Castro?

MARGIE
You know, that big-shot down in Cuba with the crazy beard.

BUD
What about him?

MARGIE
Because as far as I'm concerned, he's a no good fink. Two weeks ago I wrote him a letter -- never even answered me.

BUD
That so.

MARGIE
All I wanted him to do was let Mickey out for Christmas.

BUD
Who is Mickey?

MARGIE
My husband. He's in Havana -- in jail.

BUD
Oh. Mixed up in that revolution?

MARGIE
Mickey? He wouldn't do nothing like that. He's a jockey. They caught him doping a horse.

BUD
Well, you can't win 'em all.

They sit there silently for a moment, contemplating the injustices of the world.

MARGIE
(to herself)
'Twas the night before Christmas And all through the house Not a creature was stirring -- Nothing -- No action -- Dullsville!
(drinks; to Bud)
You married?

CONTINUED: (3)

BUD
No.

MARGIE
Family?

BUD
No.

MARGIE
A night like this, it sort of spooks you to walk into an empty apartment.

BUD
I said I had no family -- I didn't say I had an empty apartment. They both drink.

CUT TO:

INT. BUD'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The living room is dark, except for a shaft of light from the kitchen, and the glow of the colored bulbs on a small Christmas tree in front of the phony fireplace. Hunched up in one corner of the couch is Fran, still in her coat and gloves, crying softly.

Pacing up and down is Sheldrake. His coat and hat are on a chair, as are several Christmas packages. On the coffee table are an unopened bottle of Scotch, a couple of untouched glasses, and a bowl of melting ice.

SHELDRAKE
(stops and faces Fran)
Come on, Fran -- don't be like that. You just going to sit there and keep bawling?
(no answer)
You won't talk to me, you won't tell me what's wrong --
(a new approach)
Look, I know you think I'm stalling you. But when you've been married to a woman for twelve years, you don't just sit down at the breakfast table and say "Pass the sugar -- and I want a divorce." It's not that easy.
(he resumes pacing; Fran continues crying)
Anyway, this is the wrong time.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
The kids are home from school -- my in- laws are visiting for the holidays -- I can't bring it up now.
(stops in front of her)
This isn't like you, Fran -- you were always such a good sport -- such fun to be with --

FRAN
(through tears)
Yeah -- that's me. The Happy Idiot -- a million laughs.

SHELDRAKE
Well, that's more like it. At least you're speaking to me.

FRAN
Funny thing happened to me at the office party today -- I ran into your secretary -- Miss Olsen. You know -- ring-a-ding-ding? I laughed so much I like to died.

SHELDRAKE
Is that what's been bothering you -- Miss Olsen? That's ancient history.

FRAN
I was never very good at history. Let me see -- there was Miss Olsen, and then there was Miss Rossi -- no, she came before -- it was Miss Koch who came after Miss Olsen --

SHELDRAKE
Now, Fran --

FRAN
And just think -- right now there's some lucky girl in the building who's going to come after me --

SHELDRAKE
Okay, okay, Fran. I deserve that. But just ask yourself -- why does a man run around with a lot of girls? Because he's unhappy at home -- because he's lonely, that's why -- all that was before you, Fran -- I've stopped running.

CONTINUED: (2)

Fran has taken a handkerchief out of her bag and is dabbing her eyes.

FRAN
How could I be so stupid? You'd think I would have learned by now -- when you're in love with a married man, you shouldn't wear mascara.

SHELDRAKE
It's Christmas Eve, Fran -- let's not fight.

FRAN
Merry Christmas.

She hands him a flat, wrapped package.

SHELDRAKE
What is it?

He strips away the wrapping to reveal a long-playing record. The cover reads: RICKSHAW BOY - Jimmy Lee Kiang with Orchestra.

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
Oh. Our friend from the Chinese restaurant. Thanks, Fran. We better keep it here.

FRAN
Yeah, we better.

SHELDRAKE
I have a present for you. I didn't quite know what to get you -- anyway it's a little awkward for me, shopping --
(he has taken out a money clip, detaches a bill)
-- so here's a hundred dollars -- go out and buy yourself something.

He holds the money out, but she doesn't move. Sheldrake slips the bill into her open bag.

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
They have some nice alligator bags at Bergdorf's --

CONTINUED: (3)

Fran gets up slowly and starts peeling off her gloves. Sheldrake looks at her, then glances nervously at his wrist watch.

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
Fran, it's a quarter to seven -- and I mustn't miss the train -- if we hadn't wasted all that time -- I have to get home and trim the tree -

Fran has started to remove her coat.

FRAN
Okay.
(shrugs the coat back on)
I just thought as long as it was paid for --

SHELDRAKE
(an angry step toward her)
Don't ever talk like that, Fran! Don't make yourself out to be cheap.

FRAN
A hundred dollars? I wouldn't call that cheap. And you must be paying somebody something for the use of the apartment --

SHELDRAKE
(grabbing her arms)
Stop that, Fran.

FRAN
(quietly)
You'll miss your train, Jeff.

Sheldrake hurriedly puts on his hat and coat, gathers up his packages.

SHELDRAKE
Coming?

FRAN
You run along -- I want to fix my face.

SHELDRAKE
(heading for the door)
Don't forget to kill the lights. See you Monday.

CONTINUED: (4)

FRAN
Sure. Monday and Thursday -- and Monday again -- and Thursday again -

SHELDRAKE
(that stops him in the half-open door)
It won't always be like this.
(coming back)
I love you, Fran.

Holding the packages to one side, he tries to kiss her on the mouth.

FRAN
(turning her head)
Careful -- lipstick.

He kisses her on the cheek, hurries out of the apartment, closing the door. Fran stands there for a while, blinking back tears, then takes the long-playing record out of its envelope, crosses to the phonograph.

She puts the record on, starts the machine -- the music is JEALOUS LOVER. As it plays, Fran wanders aimlessly around the darkened room, her body wracked by sobs. Finally she regains control of herself, and picking up her handbag, starts through the bedroom toward the bathroom.

In the bathroom, Fran switches on the light, puts her bag on the sink, turns on the faucet. Scooping up some water, she washes the smeared mascara away, then turns the faucet off, picks up a towel.

As she is drying her face, she notices in the pull-away shaving mirror the magnified reflection of a vial of pills on the medicine shelf. Fran reaches out for the vial, turns it slowly around in her hand.

The label reads: SECONAL - ONE AT BEDTIME AS NEEDED FOR SLEEP. Fran studies the label for a second, then returns the vial to the shelf.

She opens her handbag, takes out a lipstick. As she does so, she sees the hundred dollar bill Sheldrake left in the bag. Her eyes wander back to the vial on the medicine shelf.

Then very deliberately she picks up Bud's mouthwash glass, removes the two toothbrushes from it, turns on the faucet, starts filling the glass with water.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHEAP BAR - COLUMBUS AVENUE - NIGHT

The joint is deserted now except for the Santa Claus, who is leaning against the bar, quite loaded, and Bud and Margie MacDougall, who are dancing to a slow blues coming from the juke box. Bud is still in his overcoat and bowler, and Margie is wearing her fur coat. The bartender is sweeping up the place.

BARTENDER
(to Santa Claus)
Drink up, Pop. It's closing time.

SANTA CLAUS
But it's early, Charlie.

BARTENDER
Don't you know what night this is?

SANTA CLAUS
I know, Charlie. I know. I work for the outfit.

He polishes off his drink, walks out unsteadily. The bartender approaches the dancers.

BARTENDER
Hey, knock it off, will you? Go home.

Bud and Margie ignore him, continue dancing -- or rather swaying limply cheek-to-cheek. The bartender crosses to the juke box, pulls the plug out. The music stops, but not Bud and Margie -- they continue dancing.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
O-U-T -- out!

He goes to the front of the bar, starts to extinguish the lights. Margie picks up her handbag from the bar, and Bud downs the remains of his drink.

MARGIE
Where do we go -- my place or yours?

BUD
(peering at his watch)
Might as well go to mine -- everybody else does.

CONTINUED:

He leads her through the dark bar toward the entrance. The bartender holds the door open for them as they go out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE HOUSE - NIGHT

Bud and Margie come walking down the street. As they reach the house, Bud starts up the steps, but Margie continues along the sidewalk.

MARGIE
Poor Mickey -- when I think of him all by himself in that jail in Havana --
(opening her handbag)
-- want to see his picture?

BUD
(from steps)
Not particularly.

Margie, realizing her mistake, hurries back to join him.

MARGIE
He's so cute -- five-foot-two -- ninety-nine pounds...like a little chihuahua.

They pass through the front door into the vestibule.

INT. STAIRCASE - BROWNSTONE HOUSE - NIGHT

Bud and Margie are mounting the stairs toward the apartment.

MARGIE
Can I ask you a personal question?

BUD
No.

MARGIE
You got a girl-friend?

BUD
She may be a girl -- but she's no friend of mine.

MARGIE
Still stuck on her, huh.

CONTINUED:

BUD
Stuck on her! Obviously, you don't know me very well.

MARGIE
I don't know you at all.

BUD
Permit me -- C.C. Baxter -- junior executive, Arthur Murray graduate, lover.

MARGIE
I'm Mrs. MacDougall -- Margie to you.

Bud has taken the key out of his pocket, opened the door to his apartment.

BUD
This way, Mrs. MacDougall.

He ushers her in.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

It is exactly the way we left it. There is no sign of Fran, except for the gloves she dropped on the coffee table earlier. Bud switches on the light, shuts the door.

MARGIE
(looking around)
Say, this is Snugsville.

BUD
(helping her out of her coat)
Mrs. MacDougall, I think it is only fair to warn you that you are now alone with a notorious sexpot.

MARGIE
(a gleam)
No kidding.

BUD
Ask anybody around here. As a matter of fact, when it's time for me to go -- and I may go just like that --
(snaps his fingers)
-- I have promised my body to the Columbia Medical Center.

CONTINUED:

MARGIE
(shuddering deliciously)
Gee. Sort of gives you goose-bumps just to think about it.

BUD
Well, they haven't got me yet, baby. Dig up some ice from the kitchen and let's not waste any time -- preliminary-wise.

MARGIE
I'm with you, lover.

She takes the bowl of melted ice Bud has handed her, disappears into the kitchen. As Bud starts to remove his coat, he becomes aware of a scratching noise from the phonograph.

He crosses to it, sees that the needle is stuck in the last groove of a long-playing record. Bud lifts the record off, examines it curiously, then puts it aside and substitutes the cha cha record. As the music starts, he dances over to the coat-rack beside the door, hangs up his chesterfield and bowler.

He turns back into the room, still dancing, suddenly spots Fran's gloves on the coffee table. He picks up the gloves, looks around for some convenient place to get rid of them. Moving over to the bedroom door, he opens it, tosses the gloves toward the bed inside.

He shuts the door, starts to turn away, freezes in a delayed reaction to something he saw inside. He quickly opens the door again, looks. Sprawled across the bed, on top of the bedspread, is Fran.

The light from the bathroom falls across her. She is fully dressed, still in her coat, and apparently asleep. Bud steps into the bedroom, closing the door behind him, walks over to Fran.

BUD
All right, Miss Kubelik -- get up. It's past checking-out time, and the hotel management would appreciate it if you would get the hell out of here.
(Fran doesn't stir)
Look, Miss Kubelik, I used to like you -- I used to like you a lot -- but it's all over between us -- so beat it -- O-U-T -- out!
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

BUD (CONT'D)
(no reaction; he puts a hand on her shoulder, shakes her)
Come on -- wake up!

She doesn't respond. But something falls out of her hand, rolls across the bed. Bud picks it up, looks at it -- it is his sleeping-pill vial, now uncapped and empty.

BUD (CONT'D)
(a hoarse whisper)
Oh, my God.

For a second he is paralyzed. Then he drops the vial, grabs Fran, lifts her into a sitting position on the bed, shakes her violently.

BUD (CONT'D)
Miss Kubelik! Miss Kubelik!

Fran's head droops to one side, like a rag doll's. Bud lets go of her, rushes out.

In the living room, the phonograph is still cha cha-ing away. Bud dashes to the phone, picks it up. Then it occurs to him that he doesn't know whom to call and he hangs up. Out of the kitchen comes Margie, with a bowlful of ice cubes.

MARGIE
I broke a nail trying to get the ice-tray out. You ought to buy yourself a new refrigerator.

Bud, not listening, runs past her to the hall door and out.

MARGIE (CONT'D)
(calling after him)
I didn't mean right now.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Bud arrives at the door of the Dreyfuss apartment, starts ringing the doorbell and pounding with his fist.

BUD
Dr. Dreyfuss! Hey, Doc!

The door opens, and Dr. Dreyfuss stands there sleepily, pulling on his beaten bathrobe.

BUD (CONT'D)
(words tumbling over each other)
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BUD (CONT'D)
There's a girl in my place -- she took some sleeping pills -- you better come quick -- I can't wake her up.

DR. DREYFUSS
Let me get my bag.

He disappears from the doorway.

BUD
Hurry up, Doc.

Bud turns and runs back into his apartment.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Margie has settled herself comfortably on the couch, and is fixing the drinks. The cha cha music is still going. Bud comes flying in, heads for the bedroom.

MARGIE
Hey -- over here, lover.

Bud stops in his tracks, suddenly aware of her.

MARGIE (CONT'D)
What's all this running around? You're going to wear yourself out.

Bud strides over to her purposefully, yanks her up to her feet.

MARGIE (CONT'D)
Not so rough, honey.

BUD
(taking the glass out of her hand)
Good night.

MARGIE
Good night?

BUD
(thrusting the fur coat at her)
The party's over.

MARGIE
What's the matter? Did I do something wrong?

CONTINUED:

BUD
(easing her toward door)
It's an emergency -- see you some other time.

Dr. Dreyfuss comes hurrying in, carrying his medical bag. He stops, bewildered by the sound of music and the sight of a wide-awake girl in the apartment.

BUD (CONT'D)
Not this one --
(pointing to the bedroom)
-- in there, Doc.

Dr. Dreyfuss proceeds into the bedroom.

MARGIE
Say, what's going on here, anyway?

BUD
Nothing.
(propelling her toward the door)
Just clear out, will you?

MARGIE
(pointing back)
My shoes.

Bud reaches under the coffee table, where she left her shoes, retrieves them.

MARGIE (CONT'D)
(bitterly)
Some lover you are. Some sexpot!

Bud shoves the shoes at her, takes a bill out of his wallet, hands it to her.

BUD
Here -- find yourself a phone booth and call your husband in Havana.

MARGIE
You bet I will. And when I tell him how you treated me, he'll push your face in.
(he shoves her through the open door)
You fink!

Bud slams the door shut, starts toward the bedroom. Halfway there, he becomes aware that the cha cha record is still on.

CONTINUED: (2)

He detours to the phonograph, switches it off, continues into the bedroom. In the bedroom, the overhead light is on, and Dr. Dreyfuss is working on the unconscious Fran. He has removed her coat, and is shining a flashlight into her eyes, examining her pupils. Bud approaches the bed worriedly.

BUD
She going to be all right, Doc?

DR. DREYFUSS
How many pills were in that bottle?

BUD
It was half-full -- about a dozen or so. You going to have to take her to the hospital?

Dr. Dreyfuss ignores him. Out of his medical bag, he takes a stomach tube with a rubber funnel at the end. Then he starts to lift Fran off the bed.

DR. DREYFUSS
Help me, will you?

Between them, they get Fran into an upright position.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
Into the bathroom.

They half-carry, half-drag Fran's limp form toward the bathroom.

BUD
What are you going to do, Doc?

DR. DREYFUSS
Get that stuff out of her stomach -- if it isn't too late. You better put some coffee on -- and pray.

Bud starts away as Dr. Dreyfuss takes Fran into the bathroom. Bud loses no time getting into the kitchen. He fills an aluminum kettle with water, strikes a match, lights the gas burner, puts the kettle on.

Then he takes a jar of instant coffee and a chipped coffee mug out of the cupboard, shakes an excessive portion of coffee into the mug, sticks a spoon in it. He watches the kettle for a moment, mops his brow with a handkerchief, then starts back toward the bedroom.

Bud crosses the bedroom to the half-open door of the bathroom, looks in anxiously.

CONTINUED: (3)

From inside come the sounds of a coughing spasm and running water. Bud turns away, undoes his tie and collar, paces the bedroom floor.

Something on the night table attracts his attention -- resting against the base of the lamp is a sealed envelope. Bud picks it up -- on it, in Fran's handwriting, is one word, JEFF.

He turns the letter over in his hand, trying to decide what to do with it. Dr. Dreyfuss emerges from the bathroom, carrying a pale, still unconscious Fran. Bud quickly conceals the suicide note behind his back.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
Bring my bag.

He lugs Fran into the living room. Bud stashes the letter in his back pocket, picks up the medical bag, follows them. In the living room, Dr. Dreyfuss lowers Fran into a chair. Her chin falls to her chest. Dreyfuss takes the bag from Bud, fishes out a hypodermic syringe, draws 2 c.c.'s from a bottle of picrotoxin.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
Roll up her right sleeve.

Bud does so. Dr. Dreyfuss hands the hypodermic to Bud, searches for a spot for the injection.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
Nice veins.

He swabs the spot with alcohol, takes the hypodermic back from Bud.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
Want to tell me what happened?

BUD
I don't know -- I mean -- I wasn't here -- you see -- we had some words earlier -- nothing serious, really -- what you might call a lovers' quarrel --

DR. DREYFUSS
(making off-scene injection)
So you went right out and picked yourself up another dame.

CONTINUED: (4)

BUD
Something like that.

DR. DREYFUSS
You know, Baxter, you're a real cutie-pie -- yes, you are.

Bud just stands there, taking it. Fran stirs slightly, and from her parched lips comes a low moan. Dr. Dreyfuss grabs her by the hair, lifts her head up.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
If you'd come home half an hour later, you would have had quite a Christmas present.

With his free hand, Dr. Dreyfuss slaps Fran viciously across the face. Bud winces. Dreyfuss, still holding Fran by the hair, takes a box of ammonia ampules out of his bag. He crushes one of the ampules in his hand, passes it under her nose.

Fran tries to turn her head away. Dreyfuss slaps her again, hard, crushes another ampule, repeats the process. Bud is watching tensely. From the kitchen comes the whistle of the boiling kettle, but Bud pays no attention.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
Get the coffee.

Bud hurries into the kitchen. He turns off the gas, pours the boiling water into the mug with the instant coffee, stirs it. From off, come the sounds of more slapping and some moaning. Bud carries the coffee out.

In the living room, Dr. Dreyfuss is working another ammonia ampule under Fran's nose. Her eyes start fluttering. Dreyfuss takes the coffee mug from Bud, forces it between Fran's lips, pours coffee into her mouth. Fran resists instinctively, half the coffee dribbling over her chin and dress, but Dr. Dreyfuss keeps at it.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
Let's get some air in here. Open the windows.

Bud complies promptly -- pulls up the shades, opens the windows wide.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
(putting the empty mug down)
What's her name?

CONTINUED: (5)

BUD
Miss Kubelik -- Fran.

DR. DREYFUSS
(to Fran, slowly)
Fran, I'm a doctor. I'm here because you took too many sleeping pills. Do you understand what I'm saying?
(Fran mutters something)
Fran, I'm Dr. Dreyfuss -- I'm here to help you. You took all those sleeping pills -- remember?

FRAN
(mumbling groggily)
Sleeping pills.

DR. DREYFUSS
That's right, Fran. And I'm a doctor.

FRAN
Doctor.

DR. DREYFUSS
Dr. Dreyfuss.

FRAN
Dreyfuss.

DR. DREYFUSS
(to Bud)
Get more coffee. Bud picks up the mug, leaves.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
(to Fran)
Tell me again -- what's my name?

FRAN
Dr. Dreyfuss.

DR. DREYFUSS
And what happened to you?

FRAN
I took sleeping pills.

DR. DREYFUSS
Do you know where you are, Fran?

CONTINUED: (6)

FRAN
(looking around blankly)
No.

DR. DREYFUSS
Yes, you do. Now concentrate.

FRAN
I don't know.

Bud is coming back with the coffee.

DR. DREYFUSS
(pointing to Bud)
Do you know who this is?
(Fran tries to focus)
Look at him.

FRAN
Mr. Baxter -- nineteenth floor.

BUD
Hello, Miss Kubelik.

DR. DREYFUSS
(to Bud)
Mister -- Miss -- such politeness!

BUD
(to Dr. Dreyfuss, discreetly)
Well -- we work in the same building -- and we try to keep it quiet --

FRAN
(to Bud, puzzled)
What are you doing here?

Bud throws Dr. Dreyfuss a look, as if to say that Fran's mind still wasn't functioning properly.

BUD
(to Fran)
Don't you remember? We were at the office party together --

FRAN
Oh, yes -- office party -- Miss Olsen --

CONTINUED: (7)

BUD
That's right.
(to Dr. Dreyfuss;
improvising rapidly)
I told you we had a fight -- that's what it was about -- Miss Olsen -- you know that other girl you saw --

FRAN
(still trying to figure out Bud's presence)
I don't understand --

BUD
It's not important, Fran -- the main thing is that I got here in time -- and you're going to be all right --
(to Dr. Dreyfuss)
-- isn't she, Doc?

FRAN
(closing her eyes)
I'm so tired --

DR. DREYFUSS
Here -- drink this.

He forces her to swallow some coffee.

FRAN
(pushing the mug away)
Please -- just let me sleep.

DR. DREYFUSS
You can't sleep.
(shaking her)
Come on, Fran -- open your eyes.
(to Bud)
Let's get her walking. We've got to keep her awake for the next couple of hours.

They lift her from the chair, and each draping one of her arms over his shoulder, they start to walk her up and down the room.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
(urging Fran on)
Now walk, Fran.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (8)

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
One, two, three, four -- one, two, three, four -- that's the idea -- left, right, left, right -- now we turn -- one, two, three, four --

At first, Fran's feet just drag along the floor between them. But gradually, as Dr. Dreyfuss' voice continues droning hypnotically, she falls into the rhythm of it, repeating the words after him and putting her weight on her feet.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
Left, right, left, right -- walk, walk, walk -- one, two, three, four -- turn -- left, right, left, right -- now you got it --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE APARTMENT - DAWN

Through the bedroom window comes the first faint light of dawn. Fran has been put to bed by an exhausted Dr. Dreyfuss. She is in her slip, and Dreyfuss is just drawing the blanket over her. Her eyes are closed, and she is moaning fitfully. Watching from the doorway is Bud, in shirtsleeves now, weary and disheveled.

DR. DREYFUSS
She'll sleep on and off for the next twenty-four hours. Of course, she'll have a dandy hangover when she wakes up --

BUD
Just as long as she's okay.

DR. DREYFUSS
(massaging his calves)
These cases are harder on the doctor than on the patient. I ought to charge you by the mile.

They have now moved out into the living room, where the overhead light and the Christmas tree bulbs are still on.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
Any of that coffee left?

BUD
Sure.

CONTINUED:

He goes into the kitchen. Dr. Dreyfuss takes a small notebook with a fountain pen clipped to it out of his bag, sinks down on the couch.

DR. DREYFUSS
How do you spell her last name?

BUD
(from kitchen)
Kubelik -- with two k's.

DR. DREYFUSS
What's her address?
(no answer from Bud)
Where does she live?

Bud appears from the kitchen, stirring the coffee powder in a cup of hot water.

BUD
(apprehensive)
Why do you want to know, Doc? You don't have to report this, do you?

DR. DREYFUSS
It's regulations.

BUD
(setting the coffee down)
She didn't mean it, Doc -- it was an accident -- she had a little too much to drink and -- she didn't know what she was doing -- there was no suicide note or anything -- believe me, Doc, I'm not thinking about myself --

DR. DREYFUSS
(sipping the hot coffee)
Aren't you?

BUD
It's just that she's got a family -- and there's the people in the office -- look, Doc, can't you forget you're a doctor -- let's just say you're here as a neighbor -

DR. DREYFUSS
(a long look at Bud)
Well, as a doctor, I guess I can't prove it wasn't an accident.
(closes notebook)
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
But as your neighbor, I'd like to kick your keester clear around the block.
(indicating coffee)
Mind if I cool this off?

He uncaps the bottle of Scotch, pours a large slug into his coffee.

BUD
Help yourself.

DR. DREYFUSS
(taking a big gulp of the spiked coffee)
I don't know what you did to that girl in there -- and don't tell me -- but it was bound to happen, the way you carry on. Live now, pay later. Diner's Club!
(another swig)
Why don't you grow up, Baxter? Be a mensch! You know what that means?

BUD
I'm not sure.

DR. DREYFUSS
A mansch -- a human being! So you got off easy this time -- so you were lucky --

BUD
Yeah, wasn't I?

DR. DREYFUSS
(finishing coffee)
But you're not out of the woods yet, Baxter -- because most of them try it again!
(picks up bag, starts toward door)
You know where I am if you need me.

He walks out, closing the door after him. Bud dejectedly turns off the overhead light, kicks out the plug of the Christmas tree lights, trudges into the bedroom. Fran is fast asleep. Bud picks up her dress, gets a hanger, drapes the dress over it, hangs it from the door.

An early morning chill has invaded the room, and Bud switches an the electric blanket to keep Fran warm. Then he slumps into a chair beside the bed, looks at Fran compassionately.

CONTINUED: (3)

The light on the dial of the electric blanket glows in the grayish room. Bud just sits there, watching Fran.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. STAIRCASE - BROWNSTONE HOUSE - DAY

Mrs. Lieberman, followed by her dog, is climbing the stairs to Bud's apartment, puffing asthmatically. She seems quite angry as she arrives at the door and rings the bell. There is no answer. She starts knocking impatiently.

MRS. LIEBERMAN
Mr. Baxter. Open up already!

Finally the door opens a crack, and Bud peers out. He looks like a man who has slept in his clothes -- rumpled, bleary-eyed, unshaven.

BUD
Oh -- Mrs. Lieberman.

MRS. LIEBERMAN
So who did you think it was -- Kris Kringle? What was going on here last night?

BUD
Last night?

MRS. LIEBERMAN
All that marching -- tramp, tramp, tramp -- you were having army maneuvers maybe?

BUD
I'm sorry, Mrs. Lieberman -- and I'll never invite those people again.

MRS. LIEBERMAN
What you get from renting to bachelors. All night I didn't sleep ten minutes -- and I'm sure you woke up Dr. Dreyfuss.

BUD
Don't worry about Dr. Dreyfuss -- I happen to know he was out on a case.

CONTINUED:

MRS. LIEBERMAN
I'm warning you, Mr. Baxter -- this is a respectable house, not a honky-tonky.
(to the dog)
Come on, Oscar.

Bud watches her start down the stairs with the dog, withdraws into the apartment.

INT. THE APARTMENT - DAY

Bud closes the door, crosses toward the bedroom, looks inside. Fran is asleep under the electric blanket, breathing evenly. He tries to shut the bedroom door, but it won't close completely because Fran's dress, on a hanger. is hooked over the top. He goes to the phone, picks it up, dials the operator.

BUD
(his voice low)
Operator, I want White Plains, New York -- Mr. J. D. Sheldrake --
(an added thought)
-- make it person to person.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SHELDRAKE HOUSE - DAY

The decor is split-level Early American. There is a huge Christmas tree and a jumble of presents, open gift boxes, and discarded wrappings. Sheldrake and his two sons, TOMMY and JEFF JR., are squatting on the floor, testing a Cape Canaveral set the kids got for Christmas.

Sheldrake is in a brand new dressing gown, with a manufacturer's tag still dangling from it, and the boys are in pajamas and astronaut's helmets. As for the Cape Canaveral set, it is a miniature layout of block-houses, launching pads, and assorted space-missiles. Tommy has his finger on the button controlling one of the rockets.

SHELDRAKE
(counting down)
-- let her rip!

Tommy presses the button, and a spring sends the rocket toward the ceiling. Just then, the phone in the entrance hall starts ringing.

JEFF JR.
I'll get it.

CONTINUED:

He hurries to the phone.

TOMM
Hey, Dad -- why don't we put a fly in the nose cone and see if we can bring it back alive?

SHELDRAKE
It's a thought.

TOMMY
Maybe we should send up two flies -- and see if they'll propagate in orbit.

SHELDRAKE
See if they'll what?

TOMMY
Propagate -- you know, multiply -- baby flies?

SHELDRAKE
Oh -- oh!

JEFF JR.
(coming back from the phone)
It's for you, Dad. A Mr. Baxter.

SHELDRAKE
(getting up)
Baxter?

JEFF JR.
Person to person.

Sheldrake heads quickly for the phone.

TOMMY
(to Jeff Jr.)
Come on -- help me round up some flies.

In the entrance hall, Sheldrake picks up the phone, turns his back toward the living room, speaks in a low voice.

SHELDRAKE
Hello? -- yes -- what's on your mind, Baxter?

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
I hate to disturb you, but something came up -- it's rather important -- and I think it would be a good idea if you could see me -- at the apartment -- as soon as possible.

SHELDRAKE - ON PHONE

SHELDRAKE
You're not making sense, Baxter. What's this all about?

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
I didn't want to tell you over the phone but that certain party -- you know who I mean -- I found her here last night -- she had taken an overdose of sleeping pills.

SHELDRAKE - ON PHONE

SHELDRAKE
What?

From the stairway beyond him comes:

MRS. SHELDRAKE'S VOICE
What is it, Jeff? Who's on the phone?

Sheldrake turns from the phone. Halfway down the stairs is Mrs. Sheldrake, in a quilted house-robe.

SHELDRAKE
(a nice recovery)
One of our employees had an accident -- I don't know why they bother me with these things on Christmas Day.
(into phone)
Yes, Baxter -- just how serious is it?

Out of the corner of his eye, he watches Mrs. Sheldrake come down the stairs, pass behind him on the way to the living room.

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
Well, it was touch and go there for a while -- but she's sleeping it off now.

He glances through the half-open door toward the sleeping Fran.

BUD (CONT'D)
I thought maybe you'd like to be here when she wakes up.

SHELDRAKE - ON PHONE

SHELDRAKE
That's impossible.
(an apprehensive look toward the living room)
You'll have to handle this situation yourself -- as a matter of fact, I'm counting on you --

INT. THE APARTMENT - DAY

BUD
(into phone)
Yes, sir -- I understand.
(taking Fran's letter out of his pocket)
She left a note -- you want me to open it and read it to you?
(a beat)
Well, it was just a suggestion -- no, you don't have to worry about that, Mr. Sheldrake -- I kept your name out of it so there'll be no trouble, police-wise or newspaper-wise --

As Bud continues talking on the phone, Fran, in the bedroom, opens her eyes, looks around vaguely, trying to figure out where she is. She sits up in bed, winces, holds her head in her hands -- she has a fierce hangover.

CONTINUED:

BUD (CONT'D)
(into phone)
-- you see, the doctor, he's a friend of mine -- we were very lucky in that respect -- actually, he thinks she's my girl -- no, he just jumped to the conclusion -- around here, I'm known as quite a ladies' man --

In the bedroom Fran, becoming aware of Bud's voice, crawls out of bed and holding on to the furniture, moves unsteadily toward the living room door.

BUD (CONT'D)
(into phone)
-- of course, we're not out of the woods yet -- sometimes they try it again -- yes sir, I'll do my best -- it looks like it'll be a couple of days before she's fully recovered, and I may have a little problem with the landlady --

Behind him, Fran appears in the bedroom doorway, barefooted and in her slip. She leans groggily against the door post, trying to focus on Bud and to concentrate on what he's saying.

BUD (CONT'D)
(into phone)
-- all right, Mr. Sheldrake, I'll keep her in my apartment as long as I can -- any sort of message you want me to give her? -- well, I'll think of something -- goodbye, Mr. Sheldrake.

He hangs up the phone slowly.

FRAN
(weakly)
I'm sorry.

Bud turns around, sees her standing there on rubbery legs.

FRAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Mr. Baxter.

BUD
Miss Kubelik --
(hurries toward her)
-- you shouldn't be out of bed.

CONTINUED: (2)

FRAN
I didn't know -- I had no idea this was your apartment --

BUD
(putting his arm around her)
Let me help you.

He leads her back into the bedroom.

FRAN
I'm so ashamed. Why didn't you just let me die?

BUD
What kind of talk is that?
(he lowers her onto the bed)
So you got a little over- emotional -- but you're fine now.

FRAN
(a groan)
My head -- it feels like a big wad of chewing gum. What time is it?

BUD
Two o'clock.

FRAN
(struggling to her feet)
Where's my dress? I have to go home.

Her knees buckle. Bud catches her.

BUD
You're in no condition to go anywhere -- except back to bed.

FRAN
You don't want me here --

BUD
Sure I do. It's always nice to have company for Christmas.

He tries to put her back to bed. Fran resists.

BUD (CONT'D)
Miss Kubelik, I'm stronger than you are --

CONTINUED: (3)

FRAN
I just want to go brush my teeth --

BUD
Oh -- of course. I think there's a new toothbrush somewhere.

He crosses to the bathroom, takes a plaid robe off the hook on the back of the door, hands it to Fran.

BUD (CONT'D)
Here -- put this on.

In the bathroom, he finds an unused toothbrush in a plastic container. His eyes fall on his safety razor. With a glance toward the bedroom, he unscrews the razor, removes the blade, drops it in his shirt pocket. Then he empties the blades from the dispenser, puts those in his pocket. Now he notices a bottle of iodine on the medicine shelf, stashes that in another pocket, just as Fran appears in the doorway wearing the robe.

BUD (CONT'D)
(handing her the toothbrush)
Here. How about some breakfast?

FRAN
No -- I don't want anything.

BUD
I'll fix you some coffee.

He crosses the bedroom, heading for the kitchen, stops.

BUD (CONT'D)
Oh -- we're all out of coffee -- you had quite a lot of it last night --

He thinks for a moment, hurries toward the hall door.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - DAY

Bud comes out of his apartment, leaving the door half open, heads for the Dreyfuss apartment. He rings the bell, peers down over the banister to make sure Mrs. Lieberman isn't snooping around. Mrs. Dreyfuss opens the door.

BUD
Mrs. Dreyfuss, can I borrow some coffee -- and maybe an orange and a couple of eggs?

CONTINUED:

MRS. DREYFUSS
(contemptuously)
Eggs he asks me for. Oranges. What you need is a good horse-whipping.

BUD
Ma'am?

MRS. DREYFUSS
From me the doctor has no secrets. Poor girl -- how could you do a thing like that?

BUD
I didn't really do anything -- honest -- I mean, you take a girl out a couple of times a week -- just for laughs -- and right away she thinks you're serious -- marriage-wise.

MRS. DREYFUSS
Big shot! For you, I wouldn't lift a finger -- but for her, I'll fix a little something to eat.

She slams the door in his face, Bud starts back to his apartment.

INT. THE APARTMENT - DAY

Fran enters shakily from the bedroom, looks around for the phone, locates it, picks it up. As she starts dialing, Bud comes in from the hall.

BUD
Who are you calling, Miss Kubelik?

FRAN
My sister -- she'll want to know what happened to me.

BUD
(alarmed)
Wait a minute -- let's talk this over first.
(hurries up to her, takes the receiver away)
Just what are you going to tell her?

CONTINUED:

FRAN
Well, I haven't figured it out, exactly.

BUD
You better figure it out -- exactly. Suppose she asks you why you didn't come home last night?

FRAN
I'll tell her I spent the night with a friend.

BUD
Who?

FRAN
Someone from the office.

BUD
And where are you now?

FRAN
In his apartment.

BUD
His apartment?

FRAN
I mean -- her apartment.

BUD
What's your friend's name?

FRAN
Baxter.

BUD
What's her first name?

FRAN
Miss.
(she is impressed with her own cleverness)

BUD
When are you coming home?

FRAN
As soon as I can walk.

BUD
Something wrong with your legs?

CONTINUED: (2)

FRAN
No -- it's my stomach.

BUD
Your stomach?

FRAN
They had to pump it out.

BUD
(hanging up the phone)
Miss Kubelik, I don't think you ought to call anybody -- not till that chewing gum is out of your head.
(leads her into bedroom)

FRAN
But they'll be worried about me -- my brother-in-law may be calling the police --

BUD
That's why we have to be careful -- we don't want to involve anybody -- after all, Mr. Sheldrake is a married man --

FRAN
Thanks for reminding me.

She pulls away from him, starts to get into bed.

BUD
(contritely)
I didn't mean it that way -- I was just talking to him on the phone -- he's very concerned about you.

FRAN
He doesn't give a damn about me.

BUD
Oh, you're wrong. He told me --

FRAN
He's a liar. But that's not the worst part of it -- the worst part is -- I still love him.

The doorbell rings.

CONTINUED: (3)

BUD
Must be Mrs. Dreyfuss --
(starts into living room)
-- remember the doctor -- from last night -- that's his wife.

He opens the hall door. Mrs. Dreyfuss brushes past him with a tray full of food.

MRS. DREYFUSS
So where is the victim?
(Bud indicates the bedroom)
Max the Knife!

She sweeps into the bedroom, Bud tagging along.

MRS. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
(to Fran)
Nu, little lady, how are we feeling today?

FRAN
I don't know -- kind of dizzy.

MRS. DREYFUSS
Here. The best thing for dizzy is a little noodle soup with chicken -- white meat -- and a glass tea. She sets the tray down on Fran's lap.

FRAN
Thank you. I'm really not hungry.

MRS. DREYFUSS
Go ahead! Eat! Enjoy!

She hands her the soup spoon, turns to Bud.

MRS. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
You wouldn't have such a thing as a napkin, would you?

BUD
Well, I have some paper towels --

MRS. DREYFUSS
Beatnik! Go to my kitchen -- third drawer, under the good silver, there is napkins.

BUD
Yes, Mrs. Dreyfuss.

CONTINUED: (4)

He starts out with a worried backward glance toward the two. Fran is just sitting there, the spoon in her hand, not touching the soup.

MRS. DREYFUSS
So what are you waiting for -- a singing commercial?

FRAN
I can't eat.

Mrs. Dreyfuss takes the spoon from her, starts to feed her.

MRS. DREYFUSS
You must eat -- and you must get healthy -- and you must forget him. Such a fine boy he seemed when he first moved in here -- clean and cut -- a regular Ivy Leaguer. Turns out he is King Farouk. Mit the drinking -- mit the cha cha -- mit the no napkins. A girl like you, for the rest of your life you want to cry in your noodle soup? Who needs it! You listen to me, you find yourself a nice, substantial man -- a widower maybe -- and settle down -- instead of nashing all those sleeping pills -- for what, for whom? -- for some Good Time Charlie?
(sees Bud approaching with napkin)
Sssh!

BUD
(gaily)
One napkin, coming up.
(hands it to Fran)
I wish we had some champagne to wrap it around.

MRS. DREYFUSS
(to Fran)
What did I tell you?

BUD
(uncomfortable)
Look, Mrs. Dreyfuss, you don't have to wait around. I'll wash the dishes and --

CONTINUED: (5)

MRS. DREYFUSS
You wash 'em, you break 'em. I'll come back for them later.
(to Fran)
If he makes trouble, give me a yell.

She exits.

FRAN
She doesn't seem to like you very much.

BUD
Oh, I don't mind. As a matter of fact, I'm sort of flattered -- that anybody should think a girl like you -- would do a thing like this -- over a guy like me.

FRAN
(glancing at night table)
Oh. Did you find something here -- an envelope -- ?

BUD
Yes, I've got it.
(takes envelope out of back pocket)
Don't you think we'd better destroy it? So it won't fall into the wrong hands -- ?

FRAN
Open it.

Bud tears open the envelope, takes out Sheldrake's hundred dollars.

BUD
There's nothing here but a hundred dollar bill.

FRAN
That's right. Will you see that Mr. Sheldrake gets it?

BUD
(shrugging)
Sure.

He puts the money in his pocket.

CONTINUED: (6)

FRAN
(holding out tray)
Here -- take this, will you?

Bud relieves her of the tray, sets it down.

BUD
You want me to move the television set in here?
(Fran shakes her head)
You play gin rummy?

FRAN
I'm not very good at it.

BUD
I am. Let me get the cards.

FRAN
You don't have to entertain me.

Bud opens the bureau drawer, takes out a deck of cards, a score pad, and a pencil.

BUD
Nothing I'd like better -- you know togetherness. Guess what I did last Christmas. Had an early dinner at the automat, then went to the zoo, then I came home and cleaned up after Mr. Eichelberger -- he had a little eggnog party here. I'm way ahead this year.

He pulls a chair up to the bed, starts to shuffle the cards.

BUD (CONT'D)
Three across, spades double, high deals.
(they cut)
Eight -- ten.
(he starts to deal)

FRAN
(pensively)
I think I'm going to give it all up.

BUD
Give what up?

CONTINUED: (7)

FRAN
Why do people have to love people, anyway?

BUD
Yeah -- I know what you mean.
(flips over down card)
Queen.

FRAN
I don't want it.

BUD
Pick a card.

She does, and they start playing.

FRAN
What do you call it when somebody keeps getting smashed up in automobile accidents?

BUD
A bad insurance risk?

FRAN
(nodding)
That's me with men. I've been jinxed from the word go -- first time I was ever kissed was in a cemetery.

BUD
A cemetery?

FRAN
I was fifteen -- we used to go there to smoke. His name was George -- he threw me over for a drum majorette.

BUD
Gin.

He spreads his hand. Fran lays her cards down, and Bud adds them up.

BUD (CONT'D)
Thirty-six and twenty-five -- that's sixty-one and two boxes.
(enters score on pad)

CONTINUED: (8)

FRAN
I just have this talent for falling in love with the wrong guy in the wrong place at the wrong time.

BUD
(shuffling)
How many guys were there?

FRAN
(holding up four fingers)
Three. The last one was manager of a finance company, back home in Pittsburgh -- they found a little shortage in his accounts, but he asked me to wait for him -- he'll be out in 1965.

BUD
(pushing the deck toward her)
Cut.

FRAN
(she does, and he starts dealing)
So I came to New York and moved in with my sister and her husband -- he drives a cab. They sent me to secretarial school, and I applied for a job with Consolidated - but I flunked the typing test --

BUD
Too slow?

FRAN
Oh. I can type up a storm, but I can't spell. So they gave me a pair of white gloves and stuck me in an elevator -- that's how I met Jeff --
(her eyes mist up, and she puts her cards down)
Oh, God, I'm so fouled up. What am I going to do now?

BUD
You better win a hand -- you're on a blitz.

FRAN
Was he really upset when you told him?

CONTINUED: (9)

BUD
Mr. Sheldrake? Oh, yes. Very.

FRAN
Maybe he does love me -- only he doesn't have the nerve to tell his wife.

BUD
I'm sure that's the explanation.

FRAN
You really think so?

BUD
No doubt about it.

FRAN
(a thoughtful beat, then)
Can I have that pad and the pencil?

BUD
(handing her score pad and pencil)
What for?

FRAN
I'm going to write a letter to Mrs. Sheldrake.

BUD
You are?

FRAN
As one woman to another -- I'm sure she'll understand --

BUD
Miss Kubelik, I don't think that's such a good idea.

He gently takes the pad and pencil away from her.

FRAN
Why not?

BUD
Well, for one thing, you can't spell. And secondly -- if you did something like that -- you'd hate yourself.

CONTINUED: (10)

FRAN
(fighting back tears)
I don't like myself very much anyway.

BUD
Pick up your cards and let's go.

FRAN
Do I have to?

BUD
You bet. I got a terrific hand.

Fran, her eyes drooping sleepily, picks up her cards, makes a discard.

BUD (CONT'D)
You sure you want to throw that card?

FRAN
Sure.

BUD
Gin.

He removes the cards from her hand, starts to add them up.

BUD (CONT'D)
Fifty-two and twenty-five -- that's seventy-seven -- spades is double -- a hundred and fifty-four -- and four boxes -- you're blitzed in two games.

He enters the score on the pad. As he starts to shuffle again, he notices that Fran has slid down on the pillow, and that her eyes are closed -- she is asleep. Bud rises, adjusts the blanket over her.

He stands there looking at her for a moment, runs his hand over his chin. Realizing he needs a shave, he crosses to the bathroom. In the bathroom, Bud washes his face, squirts some shaving cream into his hand, starts to apply it.

EXT. BROWNSTONE HOUSE - DAY

A Volkswagen draws up to the curb in front of the house. Kirkeby gets out on the street side, Sylvia squeezes herself out through the other door. Kirkeby raises the front hood of the Volkswagen, reaches into the luggage compartment, takes out a cardboard bucket with a bottle of champagne on ice.

CONTINUED:

Together, he and Sylvia start up the steps of the house, Sylvia already cha cha-ing in anticipation.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

In the bathroom, Bud has just finished lathering his face when the doorbell rings. He starts into the bedroom.

BUD
(muttering to himself)
All right -- all right, Mrs. Dreyfuss.

He glances at the sleeping Fran, picks up the tray, carries it into the living room, pulling the bedroom door closed behind him. But it doesn't shut completely, because of Fran's dress hooked over the top. Bud crosses to the hall door, opens it. Outside are Kirkeby, with the champagne bucket, and Sylvia.

KIRKEBY
Hi, Baxter.

BUD
(blocking the door)
What do you want?

KIRKEBY
What do I -- ?
(to Sylvia)
Just a minute.

He pushes his way into the apartment past Bud.

BUD
You can't come in.

KIRKEBY
(closing the door behind him)
What's the matter with you, Buddy-boy? I made a reservation for four o'clock, remember?

He heads for the coffee table, sets the champagne down. Bud shoots a quick glance toward the bedroom door, gets rid of the tray.

BUD
Look, you can't stay here. Just take your champagne and go.

CONTINUED:

KIRKEBY
Baxter, I don't want to pull rank on you -- but I told the lady it was all set -- you want to make a liar out of me?

BUD
Are you going to leave, Mr. Kirkeby, or do I have to throw you out?

As Bud spins him around, Kirkeby notices the dress on the bedroom door.

KIRKEBY
Buddy-boy, why didn't you say so?
(indicating dress)
You got yourself a little playmate, huh?

BUD
Now will you get out?

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - DAY

Outside the door of Bud's apartment, Sylvia is cha cha-ing impatiently. Up the stairs comes Dr. Dreyfuss, in his overcoat and carrying his medical bag.

SYLVIA
(knocking on the door)
Hey, come on, what are we waiting for? Open up, will you?

She continues cha-cha-ing. Dr. Dreyfuss has unlocked the door to his apartment, and is watching Sylvia, appalled by the fact that Baxter seems to be at it again. He starts inside.

DR. DREYFUSS
(calling)
Mildred -- !

He shuts the door behind him.

SYLVIA
(knocking on Baxter's door)
What's holding things up?

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Kirkeby looks toward the door in response to Sylvia's knocking.

CONTINUED:

KIRKEBY
Say, why don't we have ourselves a party -- the four of us?

BUD
No!

He forces Kirkeby toward the hall door. Kirkeby, glancing past him through the partly-open door of the bedroom, catches sight of Fran asleep in bed.

KIRKEBY
(grinning smugly)
Well, I don't blame you. So you hit the jackpot, eh kid -- I mean, Kubelik-wise?
(Bud opens the door, gestures him out)
Don't worry. I won't say a word to anybody.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - DAY

Kirkeby comes backing out the door of Bud's apartment, minus the champagne bucket.

KIRKEBY
Stay with it, Buddy-boy!
(Bud shuts the door on him)
Come on, Sylvia.

SYLVIA
What gives?

KIRKEBY
A little mixup in signals. Let's go.

SYLVIA
Go where?

KIRKEBY
(leading her toward stairs)
What's your mother doing this afternoon?

SYLVIA
She's home -- stuffing a turkey.

CONTINUED:

KIRKEBY
Why don't we send her to a movie -- like Ben-Hur?

SYLVIA
That's fine. But what are we going to do about grandma and Uncle Herman and Aunt Sophie and my two nieces --

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Bud comes into the bedroom. As he heads for the bathroom, Fran stirs slightly, opens her eyes.

FRAN
Who was that?

BUD
Just somebody delivering a bottle of champagne. Like some?

FRAN
(shaking her head)
Would you mind opening the window?

She turns off the electric blanket as Bud crosses to the window, pushes it up. Then a thought strikes him, and he looks at Fran suspiciously.

BUD
Now don't go getting any ideas, Miss Kubelik.

FRAN
I just want some fresh air.

BUD
It's only one story down -- the best you can do is break a leg.

FRAN
So they'll shoot me -- like a horse.

BUD
(approaching the bed)
Please, Miss Kubelik, you got to promise me you won't do anything foolish.

CONTINUED:

FRAN
Who'd care?

BUD
I would.

FRAN
(sleepily)
Why can't I ever fall in love with somebody nice like you?

BUD
(ruefully)
Yeah. Well -- that's the way it crumbles, cookie-wise. Go to sleep.

Fran closes her eyes. Bud returns to the bathroom, picks up his razor, starts to shave. But something seems to be wrong with the razor -- and unscrewing it, he realizes that there is no blade. Sheepishly, he takes out the blade he hid in his shirt pocket, inserts it in his razor, screws it shut. Then he resumes shaving.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. SHELDRAKE'S ANTEROOM - DAY

It is the morning after Christmas, and Miss Olsen and the other girls are just settling down to work. Sheldrake, in hat and coat, approaches from the elevators, comes through the glass doors.

SECRETARIES
(ad lib)
Good morning, Mr. Sheldrake.

SHELDRAKE
(ignoring them)
Miss Olsen, will you come into my office, please?

He strides into the inner office. Miss Olsen picks up her stenographic pad, follows him in.

INT. SHELDRAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheldrake is removing his hat and coat as Miss Olsen comes in, shuts the door behind her.

MISS OLSEN
Did you have a nice Christmas?

CONTINUED:

SHELDRAKE
Lovely. You were a big help.

MISS OLSEN
Me?

SHELDRAKE
Thank you for giving that little pep talk to Miss Kubelik at the office party.

MISS OLSEN
(dropping her business-like mask)
I'm sorry, Jeff. You know I could never hold my liquor --

SHELDRAKE
But I thought you could hold your tongue.

MISS OLSEN
It won't happen again.

SHELDRAKE
You bet it won't. I'll arrange for you to get a month's severance pay -
(she looks at him, uncomprehending)
That's right, Miss Olsen. I'm letting you go.

MISS OLSEN
(quietly)
You let me go four years ago, Jeff. Only you were cruel enough to make me sit out there and watch the new models pass by.

SHELDRAKE
I'd appreciate it if you'd be out of here as soon as you can.

MISS OLSEN
(formal again)
Yes, Mr. Sheldrake.

She turns and walks out of the office, shutting the door. Sheldrake looks after her for a moment, then goes to his desk, picks up the phone, dials the operator.

CONTINUED: (2)

SHELDRAKE
(into phone)
This is Mr. Sheldrake. I'd like Mr. Baxter's home telephone number -- that's C.C. Baxter, in Ordinary Premium Accounting --

INT. SHELDRAKE'S ANTEROOM - DAY

Miss Olsen has put on her coat, and is going through her desk drawers, cleaning out her personal belongings -- nail polish, emery boards, an extra pair of glasses, etc. As she stows them away in her handbag, one of the buttons on the telephone lights up. Miss Olsen hesitates for a second, then with a quick look around, she pushes the button down, carefully picks up the receiver, listens in.

INT. SHELDRAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheldrake is dialing the last two digits of a telephone number. After a moment, someone answers.

SHELDRAKE
Hello, Baxter? Jeff Sheldrake. Can you talk?

INT. THE APARTMENT - DAY

Bud, wearing slacks, a shirt open at the neck, and a cardigan sweater, is at the phone. A pillow and a blanket on the living room couch indicate where he spent the night.

BUD
(looking off)
Yes, she's in the shower -- she's coming along fine, considering.

SHELDRAKE - ON PHONE

SHELDRAKE
Good. Is there anything you need -- money -- ?

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
No, thank you, Mr. Sheldrake. As a matter of fact, I've got some money for you -- a hundred dollars --

SHELDRAKE - ON PHONE

SHELDRAKE
Oh.
(a beat)
Well, if there's anything I can do for you --

BUD - ON PHONE

BUD
For me? I don't think so. But I was hoping maybe you could do something for her --

SHELDRAKE - ON PHONE

SHELDRAKE
Like what? Put yourself in my place, Baxter -- how can I help her -- my hands are tied --

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Fran now appears in the bedroom, wearing the plaid robe, and toweling her damp hair.

BUD
(into phone)
Well, at least you can talk to her -- let me put her on -- and please be gentle --

He puts the receiver down, crosses toward the bedroom door.

BUD (CONT'D)
There's a call for you --

FRAN
(approaching)
For me?

BUD
-- Mr. Sheldrake.

FRAN
I don't want to talk to him.

BUD
I think you should. I have to run down to the grocery anyway -- all that's left around here is one frozen pizza --
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BUD (CONT'D)
(takes raincoat and old hat from hanger)
I'll be right back -- okay?

Fran nods, watches him go out. Then she glances toward the phone, which is off the hook. Reluctantly she advances toward it, picks it up.

FRAN
(into phone)
Hello, Jeff.
(a long beat)
Yes, I'm all right.

SHELDRAKE - ON PHONE

SHELDRAKE
Fran, why did you do it? It's so childish -- and it never solves anything -- I ought to be very angry with you, scaring me like that -- but let's forget the whole thing -- pretend it never happened -- what do you say, Fran?
(no answer)
Fran --

INT. SHELDRAKE'S ANTEROOM

Miss Olsen, glued to the phone, is listening intently.

SHELDRAKE - ON PHONE

SHELDRAKE
Are you there, Fran?

FRAN - ON PHONE

FRAN
Of course I'm not here -- because the whole thing never happened -- I never took those pills -- I never loved you -- we never even met -- isn't that the way you want it?

SHELDRAKE - ON PHONE

SHELDRAKE
There you go again -- you know I didn't mean it that way, Fran. Just get well -- do what the nurse tells you -- I mean Baxter -- and I'll see you as soon as I can.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
Bye, Fran.
(he hangs up)

INT. SHELDRAKE'S ANTEROOM - DAY

Miss Olsen hangs up the phone, sits there for a moment, weighing what she has overheard. Then she makes a decision, picks up the phone again, dials a number. As she waits for an answer, she glances toward Sheldrake's office.

MISS OLSEN
(into phone)
Hello, Mrs. Sheldrake? This is Miss Olsen -- fine, thank you -- Mrs. Sheldrake, I was wondering if we could have lunch together? -- well, I don't know how important it is, but I think you might find it educational -- it concerns your husband -- all right, one o'clock, at Longchamp's, Madison and 59th.

She looks up as the door to the inner office opens and Sheldrake comes out. He stops when he sees that Miss Olsen is still there.

MISS OLSEN (CONT'D)
(hanging up phone)
Don't worry, I'm on my way.
(she rises)
I was just making a personal call.

She opens her handbag, takes out a coin, puts it down on the desk.

MISS OLSEN (CONT'D)
Here's a dime.

She marches out through the glass doors toward the elevators as Sheldrake stands there, watching her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE HOUSE - DAY

Bud comes down the street, carrying a large brown paper bag overflowing with groceries. He goes up the steps of the house and through the front door.

INT. STAIRCASE AND SECOND FLOOR LANDING - DAY

As Bud starts up the stairs, with the groceries, Mrs. Lieberman comes hurrying down toward him.

CONTINUED:

MRS. LIEBERMAN
(breathlessly)
Oh, Mr. Baxter -- I'm glad you're here -- I was just going to get the passkey.

BUD
What for?

MRS. LIEBERMAN
I thought I smelled gas coming from your apartment.

BUD
Gas?

He races up the stairs two at a time, fumbling frantically for his key. Reaching the door of his apartment, he unlocks it, dashes in.

INT. THE APARTMENT - DAY

Bud comes bursting through the door. The living room is empty, and the bedclothes have been removed from the couch.

BUD
(calling)
Miss Kubelik!

He dumps the bag of groceries on a table, rushes into the kitchen. The burner has been turned on under the kettle, but there is no flame, and gas is hissing from the vents. Bud snaps it off, starts out again.

BUD (CONT'D)
Miss Kubelik!

Meanwhile Fran has appeared from the bathroom, and is approaching the bedroom door. She is still in her robe, and is holding a double sock-stretcher with one of Bud's socks on it. Bud, rounding the corner from the kitchen at full speed, collides with Fran in the bedroom doorway. He grabs her arms with obvious relief.

BUD (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

FRAN
Sure.
(sniffs)
What's that funny smell?

CONTINUED:

BUD
Gas.
(indicating kitchen)
Didn't you turn it on?

FRAN
Yes. I was boiling some water to get the coffee stains out of my dress.

BUD
(accusingly)
You turned it on -- but you didn't light it.

FRAN
Are you supposed to?

BUD
In this house, you're supposed to.

FRAN
Oh.

Bud starts to take off his hat and coat, notices the sock-stretcher in her hand.

BUD
What are you doing with that?

FRAN
I was washing my stockings, so I decided I might as well do your socks.

BUD
Thank you.

FRAN
It's very curious -- I could only find three and a half pair.

BUD
Well, things are a little disorganized around here.

He carries the bag of groceries into the kitchen, Fran trailing after him. During the following, he removes the contents of the bag -- bread, eggs, bacon, spaghetti, ground round, frankfurters, and assorted canned goods -- sets them out on the drainboard.

CONTINUED: (2)

FRAN
I'd say. What's a tennis racquet doing in the kitchen?

She produces the racquet from behind the stove.

BUD
Tennis racquet? Oh, I remember -- I was cooking myself an Italian dinner.
(Fran looks at him oddly)
I used it to strain the spaghetti.

FRAN
(thinking it over)
Why not?

BUD
As a matter of fact, I'm a pretty good cook -- but I'm a lousy housekeeper.

FRAN
Yes, you are,
(indicating the living room)
When I was straightening up the couch, you know what I found? Six hairpins, a lipstick, a pair of false eyelashes, and a swizzle stick from the Stork Club.

BUD
(shrugging)
It's just that I'm the kind of guy who can't say no -- I don't mean to girls -- I mean --

FRAN
You mean to someone like Mr. Sheldrake.

BUD
I guess so.

FRAN
I know so. He's a taker.

BUD
A what?

CONTINUED: (3)

FRAN
Some people take, some people get took -- and they know they're getting took -- and there's nothing they can do about it.

BUD
I wouldn't say that --
(trying to change the subject)
What would you like to have for diner? There's onion soup and canned asparagus --

FRAN
I really ought to be getting home. My family will be flipping by now.

She starts into the living room. Bud follows her.

BUD
You can't leave yet. The doctor says it takes forty-eight hours to get the stuff out of your system.

FRAN
(wistfully)
I wonder how long it takes to get someone you're stuck on out of your system? If they'd only invent some kind of a pump for that --

She sits on the arm of a chair.

BUD
I know how you feel, Miss Kubelik. You think it's the end of the world -- but it's not, really. I went through exactly the same thing myself.

FRAN
You did?

BUD
Well, maybe not exactly -- I tried to do it with a gun.

FRAN
Over a girl?

CONTINUED: (4)

BUD
Worse than that -- she was the wife of my best friend -- and I was mad for her. But I knew it was hopeless -- so I decided to end it all. I went to a pawnshop and bought a forty-five automatic and drove up to Eden Park -- do you know Cincinnati?

FRAN
No, I don't.

BUD
Anyway, I parked the car and loaded the gun -- well, you read in the papers all the time that people shoot themselves, but believe me, it's not that easy -- I mean, how do you do it? -- here, or here, or here --
(with cocked finger, he points to his temple, mouth and chest)
-- you know where I finally shot myself?

FRAN
Where?

BUD
(indicating kneecap)
Here.

FRAN
In the knee?

BUD
Uh-huh. While I was sitting there, trying to make my mind up, a cop stuck his head in the car, because I was illegally parked -- so I started to hide the gun under the seat and it went off -- pow!

FRAN
(laughing)
That's terrible.

BUD
Yeah. Took me a year before I could bend my knee -- but I got over the girl in three weeks.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (5)

BUD (CONT'D)
She still lives in Cincinnati, has four kids, gained twenty pounds -- she sends me a fruit cake every Christmas.

FRAN
(suddenly suspicious)
Are you just making that up to make me feel better?

BUD
Of course not. Here's the fruit cake.
(shows it to her under Christmas tree)
And you want to see my knee?
(starts to raise pant-leg)

FRAN
No, thanks. The fellows in the office may get the wrong idea how I found out.

BUD
So let 'em. Look, I'm going to cook dinner for us. We'll have the fruit cake for dessert. You just sit there and rest. You've done enough for one day.

FRAN
(smiling)
Yes, nurse.

Bud starts happily into the kitchen.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOBBY INSURANCE BUILDING - DAY

It is mid-afternoon, and traffic is light. A Yellow Cab has pulled up in front of the entrance, and the driver, a stockily-built young man in a leather jacket and cap, gets out and comes through the revolving doors into the lobby. His name is KARL MATUSCHKA, and he is Fran's brother-in-law. As he cases the elevators, the starter comes up to him.

ELEVATOR STARTER
Can I help you?

MATUSCHKA
I'm looking for one of the elevator girls -- Miss Kubelik.

CONTINUED:

ELEVATOR STARTER
So am I. She didn't report this morning.

MATUSCHKA
She didn't. Where can I get some information -- who's in charge here?

ELEVATOR STARTER
That comes under General Office Administration. See Mr. Dobisch, twenty-first floor.

MATUSCHKA
Thanks.

He steps into an elevator, the doors of which are just closing.

INT. DOBISCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Dobisch is sitting behind his desk, lighting a cigar. Kirkeby, who has dropped in for a little visit, is perched on the edge of the desk.

KIRKEBY
-- so yesterday afternoon I take Sylvia up to the apartment, and guess who he's got stashed away in the bedroom?

DOBISCH
Who?

KIRKEBY
Kubelik.

DOBISCH
No kidding. Buddy-boy and Kubelik having themselves a little toot!

KIRKEBY
Toot? It's more like a lost weekend. Neither of them showed up for work today.

DOBISCH
A.W.O.L.?

CONTINUED:

KIRKEBY
What gripes me is the two of them were guzzling my champagne while Sylvia and I wound up at the Guggenheim Museum.

The glass door opens and Matuschka comes in.

MATUSCHKA
Mr. Dobisch?

DOBISCH
Yeah.

MATUSCHKA
My name is Karl Matuschka -- my sister-in-law, she runs one of the elevators here -- Fran Kubelik.

KIRKEBY
(exchanging a glance with Dobisch)
Miss Kubelik?

MATUSCHKA
You know her?

DOBISCH
Of course. There may be a lot of employees here -- but we're one big happy family.

MATUSCHKA
Well, she lives with us -- and my wife, she's getting a little nervous -- on account of Fran hasn't been home for two days.

KIRKEBY
(another look at Dobisch)
That so.

MATUSCHKA
Anyway, we was wondering if somebody in the office would know what happened to her.

DOBISCH
I see.
(to Kirkeby)
What do you think, Al? Can we help the man?

CONTINUED: (2)

KIRKEBY
(after a pregnant pause)
Why not? We don't owe Buddy-boy anything.

DOBISCH
Yeah. What's Buddy-boy done for us lately?

MATUSCHKA
(scowling)
Who is Buddy-boy?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE APARTMENT - EVENING

Buddy-boy is bending over a hot stove, preparing an Italian dinner. He takes a saucepan of spaghetti off the fire, and picking up the tennis racquet with the other hand, pours the spaghetti on top of the racquet strings. Then he turns on the faucet, runs water over the spaghetti. With the combined technique of Brillat-Savarin and Pancho Gonzales, he gently agitates the racquet, letting the water drain off the spaghetti. As he works, he hums a theme from Tschaikowsky's Capriccio Italien. Fran walks in, still in her robe.

FRAN
Are we dressing for dinner?

BUD
No -- just come as you are.

FRAN
(watching him)
Say, you're pretty good with that racquet.

BUD
You ought to see my backhand.
(dumping spaghetti into platter)
And wait till I serve the meatballs.
(demonstrates)

FRAN
Shall I light the candles?

BUD
It's a must -- gracious-living-wise.

CONTINUED:

As Fran starts into the living room, Bud begins to ladle meat sauce onto the spaghetti, humming operatically. In the living room, the small table has been set for two, and prominent on it is the champagne bottle that Mr. Kirkeby left behind, still in its cardboard bucket, but freshly iced. As Fran lights the candles, she notices the napkins on the table, peels a price-tag off the corner of one of them.

FRAN
I see you bought some napkins.

BUD
Might as well go all the way.

He carries the platter of spaghetti and meat sauce in from the kitchen, sets it on the table, sprinkles some cheese on it. Then he crosses to the coffee table, where a full martini pitcher stands in readiness, fills a couple of glasses. Fran seats herself at the table.

BUD (CONT'D)
You know, I used to live like Robinson Crusoe -- shipwrecked among eight million people. Then one day I saw a footprint in the sand -- and there you were --
(hands her martini)
It's a wonderful thing -- dinner for two.

FRAN
You usually eat alone?

BUD
Oh, no. Sometimes I have dinner with Ed Sullivan, sometimes with Dinah Shore or Perry Como -- the other night I had dinner with Mae West -- of course, she was much younger then.
(toasting)
Cheers.

FRAN
Cheers.

They drink.

BUD
You know what we're going to do after dinner?

CONTINUED: (2)

FRAN
The dishes?

BUD
I mean, after that?

FRAN
What?

BUD
You don't have to if you don't want to --

FRAN
I don't?

BUD
We're going to finish that gin game.

FRAN
Oh.

BUD
So I want you to keep a clear head.

The door bell rings. Carrying his martini glass, Bud crosses to the door, starts to open it.

BUD (CONT'D)
Because I don't want to take advantage of you -- the way I did yesterday in bed.

By now the door is open, and Bud is speaking to Fran over his shoulder. He turns, finds himself face to face with Karl Matuschka, who is standing grimly in the doorway.

MATUSCHKA
Baxter?

BUD
Yes?

Matuschka shoves him roughly aside, strides past him toward Fran, who has risen to her feet.

MATUSCHKA
What's with you, Fran -- did you forget where you live?

CONTINUED: (3)

FRAN
(to Bud)
This is my brother-in-law, Karl Matuschka.

BUD
(friendly)
How do you do, Mr. Matuschka?

MATUSCHKA
(pushing Bud away; to Fran)
Okay, get your clothes on. I got the cab downstairs.

BUD
Now, wait a minute. I know what you're thinking -- but it's not as bad as it looks --

MATUSCHKA
(shoving him away)
It's none of my business what you do, Fran -- you're over twenty- one -- but your sister happens to think you're a lady.

BUD
All we were going to do is eat and wash the dishes --

MATUSCHKA
(grabbing him)
Look, Buddy-boy -- if there wasn't a lady present, I'd clobber you.

FRAN
(separating them)
All right, Karl -- I'll get dressed.

She exits into the bedroom, removing her dress from the door, and closing it. Matuschka leans against the wall beside the hall door, eyeing Bud truculently. Bud raises a finger to remonstrate with him -- then breaks into a nervous, ingratiating smile.

BUD
Care for a martini? Champagne?
(Matuschka continues glaring at him)
How about a little spaghetti with meat sauce? Made it myself.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (4)

BUD (CONT'D)
(Matuschka just scowls)
Your sister-in-law sure is terrific...
(realizes his mistake; switching abruptly)
Must be murder driving a cab in New York -- I mean, with all that cross-town traffic --

He gestures with the martini glass, spilling the contents over his shirtfront. Through the partly open hall door, Dr. Dreyfuss sticks his head in.

DR. DREYFUSS
Hi, Baxter.

He steps into the apartment, passing Matuschka without seeing him.

DR. DREYFUSS (CONT'D)
How's the patient?

BUD
(quickly)
Oh, I'm fine, Doc.

DR. DREYFUSS
Not you -- Miss Kubelik.

MATUSCHKA
(stepping forward)
What's the matter with Miss Kubelik?

BUD
Oh, this is Mr. Matuschka -- he's Miss Kubelik's -- he's got a cab downstairs --

MATUSCHKA
(to Dreyfuss)
Fran been sick or something?

Dr. Dreyfuss looks at Bud.

BUD
No, no -- just had a little accident.

MATUSCHKA
(to Dreyfuss)
What does he mean, accident?

CONTINUED: (5)

DR. DREYFUSS
Well, these things happen all the time --

MATUSCHKA
What things?
(grabbing Dreyfuss)
Say, what kind of doctor are you, anyway?

BUD
(hastily)
Oh, not that kind.

He just gave her a shot and pumped her stomach out -- Behind them, the bedroom door has opened, and Fran comes out, wearing her coat over her dress.

MATUSCHKA
What for?

FRAN
(coming up)
Because I took some sleeping pills. But I'm all right now -- so let's go.

MATUSCHKA
Why did you take sleeping pills?

BUD
(promptly)
On account of me.

MATUSCHKA
(whirling on him)
You?

BUD
Who else?

Matuschka lashes out with a left to Bud's jaw, and while he is off balance, catches him with a right to the eye. Bud falls back against the Christmas tree, which topples with a crash. Fran pulls Matuschka away from him.

FRAN
Leave him alone, Karl.

She kneels beside Bud.

CONTINUED: (6)

FRAN (CONT'D)
(tenderly)
You fool -- you damn fool.

MATUSCHKA
Come on, Fran.

FRAN
Goodbye, Mr. Baxter.

She kisses him on the cheek, rises, starts toward the door.

FRAN (CONT'D)
Goodbye, doctor.

She follows Matuschka out. Bud looks after her, starry-eyed.

DR. DREYFUSS
I don't want to gloat, but just between us, you had that coming to you.
(tilts Bud's chin up, examines his eye)
Tch, tch, tch. Are you going to have a shiner tomorrow. Let me get my bag.
(he starts out)

BUD
(calling after him)
Don't bother, Doc. It doesn't hurt a bit.

He is on Cloud Nine.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. NINETEENTH FLOOR - DAY

Bud is coming from the elevators toward his office. He is wearing his chesterfield, bowler, and a pair of dark glasses. He opens the office door, starts in.

INT. BUD'S OFFICE - DAY

Bud crosses directly to the phone, removes his glasses revealing a swollen left eye. He dials a number.

BUD
(into phone)
Mr. Sheldrake's office?
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BUD (CONT'D)
This is C.C. Baxter. Would you please tell Mr. Sheldrake I'd like to come up and see him? It's rather important. Will you call me back, please?

He hangs up, takes off his hat and coat, deposits them on the clothes- tree. Then he paces around the office, rehearsing a speech out loud.

BUD (CONT'D)
Mr. Sheldrake, I've got good news for you. All your troubles are over. I'm going to take Miss Kubelik off your hands.
(nods to himself with satisfaction)
The plain fact is, Mr. Sheldrake, that I love her. I haven't told her yet, but I thought you should be the first to know. After all, you don't really want her, and I do, and although it may sound presumptuous, she needs somebody like me. So I think it would be the thing all around --
(the phone rings and he picks it up)
-- solution-wise.
(into phone)
Yes? I'll be right up.

He hangs up, crosses to the door, opens it.

BUD (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Mr. Sheldrake, I've got good news for you --

Putting on his dark glasses, he heads for the elevators, still talking to himself.

INT. NINETEENTH FLOOR - DAY

Kirkeby and Dobisch are just stepping out of an elevator when Bud approaches. They grin smugly when they see that he is wearing dark glasses.

KIRKEBY
Hi, Buddy-boy. What happened to you?

CONTINUED:

DOBISCH
Hit by a swinging door? Or maybe a Yellow Cab?

Bud pays no attention, walks right past them into the elevator, still muttering to himself. The doors close.

KIRKEBY
(as they move away from the elevators)
That guy really must've belted him.

DOBISCH
Yeah, he's punchy. Talking to himself.

INT. TWENTY-SEVENTH FLOOR FOYER - DAY

The elevator doors open.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR
Twenty-seven.

Bud steps out. As he heads for Sheldrake's office, he continues rehearsing his speech.

BUD
You see, Mr. Sheldrake, those two days she spent in the apartment -- it made me realize how lonely I'd been before. But thanks to you, I'm in a financial position to marry her -- if I can ever square things with her family.

He opens the door to Sheldrake's anteroom.

INT. SHELDRAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheldrake is pacing in front of his desk. A couple of suitcases are standing in a corner of the room. The intercom buzzes, and Sheldrake presses the lever down.

SECRETARY'S VOICE
Mr. Baxter is here.

SHELDRAKE
Send him in.

A beat, then the door opens, and Bud marches in determinedly.

CONTINUED:

BUD
Mr. Sheldrake, I've got good news for you --

SHELDRAKE
And I've got good news for you, Baxter. All your troubles are over.

BUD
(reacting to the echo)
Sir?

SHELDRAKE
I know how worried you were about Miss Kubelik -- well, stop worrying -- I'm going to take her off your hands.

BUD
(stunned)
You're going to take her off my hands?

SHELDRAKE
That's right.
(indicating suitcases)
I've moved out of my house -- I'm going to be staying in town, at the Athletic Club.

BUD
You left your wife?

SHELDRAKE
Well, if you must know -- I fired my secretary, my secretary got to my wife, and my wife fired me. Ain't that a kick in the head?

BUD
Yeah --

SHELDRAKE
Now what was your news, Baxter?

BUD
(recovering with difficulty)
It's about Miss Kubelik -- she's all right again -- so she went back home.

CONTINUED: (2)

SHELDRAKE
Swell. And don't think I've forgotten what you did for me.
(opens door to adjoining office)
This way, Baxter.

Bud advances slowly toward the door.

INT. ADJOINING OFFICE - DAY

It is a slightly smaller and less lavish edition of Sheldrake s office. Sheldrake ushers Bud through the door, points to the chair behind the desk.

SHELDRAKE
Sit down. Try it on for size.

Bud obeys like an automaton, lowers himself into the chair.

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
You like?
(indicating office)
It's all yours.

BUD
Mine?

SHELDRAKE
My assistant, Roy Thompson, has been shifted to the Denver office, and you're taking his place.
(no reaction from Bud)
What's the matter, Baxter? You don't seem very excited.

BUD
Well, it's just that so many things have been happening so fast -- I'm very pleased -- especially for Miss Kubelik. Now that I've gotten to know her better, I think she's the kind of girl that definitely ought to be married to somebody --

SHELDRAKE
Oh, sure, sure. But first the property settlement has to be worked out -- then it takes six weeks in Reno -- meanwhile, I'm going to enjoy being a bachelor for a while.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
(starts back toward his own office)
Oh, by the way, you can now have lunch in the executive dining room -

BUD
Yes, sir.

He removes his dark glasses reflectively.

SHELDRAKE
That's just one of the privileges that goes with this job. You also get a nice little expense account, the use of the executive washroom --
(breaks off, peers at Bud's face)
Say, what happened to you, Baxter?

BUD
I got kicked in the head, too.

SHELDRAKE
Oh?

With a shrug, he exits into his own office, closing the door behind him. Bud sits there, unconsciously bending the glasses in his hand until they suddenly snap in two. Bud glances down at the two broken halves, as though surprised by his own violence, tosses them on the desk.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOBBY INSURANCE BUILDING - EVENING

We are close on the building directory. Listed under PERSONNEL is J.D. SHELDRAKE, Director, and just below that a man's hand is inserting the name C.C. BAXTER in the slot marked Asst. Director. The lettering is complete except for the final R.

Camera pulls back to reveal the sign painter we saw earlier, working on the directory. Watching him is Bud. He is wearing his chesterfield and bowler, and still has a slight welt under his left eye. It is after six o'clock, and there is very little activity in the lobby. Fran, wearing her coat over street clothes, approaches from the direction of the elevators, stops when she sees Bud.

FRAN
Good evening, Mr. Baxter.

Bud turns to her in surprise, removes his bowler.

CONTINUED:

BUD
Oh, Miss Kubelik. How do you feel?

FRAN
Fine. How's your eye?

BUD
Fine.

There is a moment of constraint between them.

FRAN
How's everything at the apartment?

BUD
Nothing's changed. You know, we never finished that gin game --

FRAN
I know.
(a beat)
I suppose you heard about Mr. Sheldrake --?

BUD
You mean, leaving his wife? Yeah. I'm very happy for you.

FRAN
I never thought he'd do it.

BUD
I told you all along. You see, you were wrong about Mr. Sheldrake.

FRAN
I guess so.

BUD
For that matter, you were wrong about me, too. What you said about those who take and those who get took? Well, Mr. Sheldrake wasn't using me -- I was using him. See?
(indicating his name on directory)
Last month I was at desk 861 on the nineteenth floor -- now I'm on the twenty-seventh floor, paneled office, three windows -- so it all worked out fine -- we're both getting what we want.

CONTINUED: (2)

FRAN
Yes.
(looks at her watch)
You walking to the subway?

BUD
No, thank you.
(fumbling)
I -- well, to tell you the truth --
(glancing around lobby)
-- I have this heavy date for tonight --

He points off toward the newsstand. Standing there is a tall, attractive brunette, obviously waiting for someone. Fran looks off in the indicated direction.

FRAN
Oh.

BUD
Aren't you meeting Mr. Sheldrake?

FRAN
No. You know how people talk. So I decided it would be better if we didn't see each other till everything is settled, divorce-wise.

BUD
That's very wise.

FRAN
Good night, Mr. Baxter.

BUD
Good night, Miss Kubelik.

Fran walks toward the revolving doors. Bud watches her for a moment, then strides briskly across the lobby toward the newsstand. He goes right past the waiting brunette, stops in front of a rack of pocket books, examines the merchandise. A man now comes out of a phone booth, joins the waiting brunette, and they go off together. Bud picks out a couple of paperbacks, pays the clerk behind the counter. Stuffing a book into each coat pocket, he moves slowly toward the revolving doors.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHELDRAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheldrake is swiveled around sideways behind his desk, with a bootblack kneeling in front of him, shining his shoes. Reaching for the intercom, Sheldrake presses down one of the levers.

SHELDRAKE
Baxter -- would you mind stepping in here for a minute?

BAXTER'S VOICE
Yes, Mr. Sheldrake.

The bootblack finishes the second shoe with a flourish, gathers up his equipment. Sheldrake tosses him a half dollar.

BOOTBLACK
Much obliged.

He exits into the anteroom as the door of the adjoining office opens and Bud comes in, carrying several charts. There is no trace left of his black eye.

BUD
(putting charts on desk)
Here's the breakdown of figures on personnel turnover. Thirty-seven percent of our female employees leave to get married, twenty-two percent quit because --

SHELDRAKE
(breaking in)
You're working too hard, Baxter. It's New Year's Eve -- relax.

BUD
Yes, sir.

SHELDRAKE
I suppose you'll be on the town tonight -- celebrating?

BUD
Naturally.

SHELDRAKE
Me, too. I'm taking Miss Kubelik out -- I finally talked her into it...

CONTINUED:

BUD
I see.

SHELDRAKE
The only thing is I'm staying at the Athletic Club -- and it's strictly stag so if you don't mind...

BUD
Don't mind what?

SHELDRAKE
You know that other key to your apartment -- well, when we had that little scare about Miss Kubelik, I thought I'd better get rid of it quick -- so I threw it out the window of the commuter train.

BUD
Very clever.

SHELDRAKE
Now I'll have to borrow your key.

BUD
Sorry, Mr. Sheldrake.

SHELDRAKE
What do you mean, sorry?

BUD
You're not going to bring anybody up to my apartment.

SHELDRAKE
I'm not just bringing anybody -- I'm bringing Miss Kubelik.

BUD
Especially not Miss Kubelik.

SHELDRAKE
How's that again?

BUD
(flatly)
No key!

CONTINUED: (2)

SHELDRAKE
Baxter, I picked you for my team because I thought you were a bright young man. You realize what you're doing? Not to me -- but to yourself. Normally it takes years to work your way up to the twenty-seventh floor -- but it takes only thirty seconds to be out on the street again. You dig?

BUD
(nodding slowly)
I dig.

SHELDRAKE
So what's it going to be?

Without taking his eyes off Sheldrake, Bud reaches into his pocket, fishes out a key, drops it on the desk.

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
Now you're being bright?

BUD
Thank you, sir.

He turns abruptly, starts back into his own office.

INT. BUD'S NEW OFFICE - DAY

Bud comes in, shutting the door behind him, stands rooted to the spot for a moment. Then he takes some pencils out of his breast pocket and drops them into a container on the desk, closes his account book, slams a couple of open file drawers shut. As he crosses to the clothes closet, the connecting door opens and Sheldrake comes in, key in hand.

SHELDRAKE
Say, Baxter -- you gave me the wrong key.

BUD
No I didn't.

SHELDRAKE
(holding it out)
But this is the key to the executive washroom.

CONTINUED:

BUD
That's right, Mr. Sheldrake. I won't be needing it -- because I'm all washed up around here.

He has taken his chesterfield and bowler out of the closet, and is putting the coat on.

SHELDRAKE
What's gotten into you, Baxter?

BUD
Just following doctor's orders. I've decided to become a mensch. You know what that means? A human being.

SHELDRAKE
Now hold on, Baxter --

BUD
Save it. The old payola won't work any more. Goodbye, Mr. Sheldrake.

He opens the door to the anteroom, starts out.

INT. SHELDRAKE'S ANTEROOM - DAY

Bud comes out of his office, carrying his bowler, strides past the secretaries and through the glass doors to the foyer. An elevator is just unloading, and beside it a handyman is cleaning out one of the cigarette receptacles. Bud crosses to the elevator, and as he passes the handyman, he jams his bowler on the man's head -- surrendering his crown, so to speak. The elevator doors close. The handyman straightens up, looks around in bewilderment.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bud is in the process of packing. In the middle of the living room are several large cardboard cartons filled with his possessions. The art posters are off the walls, the bric-a-brac has been removed from the shelves, and Bud is stowing away the last of his books and records.

He crosses to the fireplace, opens one of the drawers in the cabinet above it, takes out a forty-five automatic. He holds the gun in the palm of his hand, studies it appraisingly. The doorbell rings. Bud snaps out of his reverie, drops the gun into one of the cartons, goes to the door and opens it.

CONTINUED:

Standing outside is Dr. Dreyfuss, with a plastic ice bucket in his hand.

DR. DREYFUSS
Say, Baxter -- we're having a little party and we ran out of ice -- so I was wondering --

BUD
Sure, Doc.

DR. DREYFUSS
(stepping inside)
How come you're alone on New Year's Eve?

BUD
Well, I have things to do --

DR. DREYFUSS
(noticing cartons)
What's this -- you packing?

BUD
Yeah -- I'm giving up the apartment.

He goes into the kitchen, opens the refrigerator, starts to pry out the ice-cube trays.

DR. DREYFUSS
Where are you moving to?

BUD
I don't know. All I know is I got to get out of this place.

DR. DREYFUSS
Sorry to lose you, Baxter.

BUD
Me? Oh, you mean my body. Don't worry, Doc -- it'll go to the University -- I'll put it in writing --

He dumps the ice-cubes, still in their trays, into the bucket Dr. Dreyfuss is holding. Then he pulls Kirkeby's unopened bottle of champagne out of the refrigerator.

BUD (CONT'D)
Can you use a bottle of champagne?

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. DREYFUSS
Booze we don't need. Why don't you join us, Baxter? We got two brain surgeons, an ear, nose and throat specialist, a proctologist, and three nurses from Bellevue.

BUD
No, thanks -- I don't feel like it. Look, Doc -- in case I don't see you again -- how much do I owe you for taking care of that girl?

DR. DREYFUSS
Forget it -- I didn't do it as a doctor -- I did it as a neighbor.
(stopping in doorway)
By the way, whatever happened to her?

BUD
(airily)
You know me with girls. Easy come, easy go. Goodbye, Doc.

DR. DREYFUSS
Happy New Year.

Bud closes the door, returns to the kitchen, brings out a box of glassware and the tennis racquet. As he starts to deposit the racquet in a carton, he notices a strand of spaghetti clinging to the strings. He removes it gently, stands there twirling the limp spaghetti absently around his finger.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

It is five minutes before midnight, New Year's Eve. Sitting alone in the last booth is Fran, a paper hat on her head, a pensive look on her face. There are two champagne glasses on the table, and the usual noisemakers, but the chair opposite her is empty.

Above the general hubbub, the Chinese pianist can be heard playing. After a moment, Fran glances off. Threading his way through the merrymakers crowding the bar and overflowing from the booths is Sheldrake. He is in dinner clothes, topped by a paper hat. Reaching the last booth, he drops into the chair facing Fran.

CONTINUED:

SHELDRAKE
Sorry it took me so long on the phone. But we're all set.

FRAN
All set for what?

SHELDRAKE
I rented a car -- it's going to be here at one o'clock -- we're driving to Atlantic City.

FRAN
Atlantic City?

SHELDRAKE
I know it's a drag -- but you can't find a hotel room in town -- not on New Year's Eve.

FRAN
(a long look at Sheldrake)
Ring out the old year, ring in the new. Ring-a-ding-ding.

SHELDRAKE
I didn't plan it this way, Fran -- actually, it's all Baxter's fault.

FRAN
Baxter?

SHELDRAKE
He wouldn't give me the key to the apartment.

FRAN
He wouldn't.

SHELDRAKE
Just walked out on me -- quit -- threw that big fat job right in my face.

FRAN
(a faint smile)
The nerve.

SHELDRAKE
That little punk -- after all I did for him!
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
He said I couldn't bring anybody to his apartment -- especially not Miss Kubelik. What's he got against you, anyway?

FRAN
(a faraway look in her eye)
I don't know. I guess that's the way it crumbles -- cookie-wise.

SHELDRAKE
What are you talking about?

FRAN
I'd spell it out for you -- only I can't spell.

The piano player is consulting the watch on his upraised left arm. He drops the arm in a signal, and the lights go out. At the same time, he strikes up AULD LANG SYNE. All over the dimly lit room, couples get to their feet, embracing and joining in the song. In the last booth, Sheldrake leans across the table, kisses Fran.

SHELDRAKE
Happy New Year, Fran.

Fran's expression is preoccupied. Sheldrake faces in the direction of the pianist, and holding his glass aloft, sings along with the others. As AULD LANG SYNE comes to an end, the place explodes noisily -- there is a din of horns, ratchets, and shouted greetings. The lights come up again. In the last booth, Sheldrake turns back toward Fran -- but she is no longer there. Her paper hat lies abandoned on her vacated chair.

SHELDRAKE (CONT'D)
Fran --
(looking around)
-- where are you, Fran?

He rises, cranes his neck, trying to spot her in the crowd.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE HOUSE - NIGHT

Fran, a coat thrown over the dress she was wearing at the Rickshaw, comes down the street almost at a run. There is a happy, expectant look on her face. She hurries up the steps of the house and through the front door.

INT. STAIRCASE AND SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Fran mounts the stairs eagerly. As she reaches the landing and heads for Bud's apartment, there is a loud, sharp report from inside. Fran freezes momentarily, then rushes to the door.

FRAN
Mr. Baxter!
(pounding on door)
Mr. Baxter! Mr. Baxter!

The door opens and there stands Bud, the bottle of champagne he has just uncorked still foaming over in his hand. He stares at Fran unbelievingly.

FRAN (CONT'D)
(sagging with relief)
Are you all right?

BUD
I'm fine.

FRAN
Are you sure? How's your knee?

BUD
I'm fine all over.

FRAN
Mind if I come in?

BUD
(still stunned)
Of course not.

INT. THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Fran comes in and Bud shuts the door. The room is the same as we left it, except for an empty champagne glass standing on the coffee table.

BUD
Let me get another glass.

He goes to one of the cartons, takes out a champagne glass wrapped in newspaper, starts to unwrap it.

FRAN
(looking around)
Where are you going?

CONTINUED:

BUD
Who knows? Another neighborhood -- another town -- another job -- I'm on my own.

FRAN
That's funny -- so am I.
(Bud, pouring champagne, looks up at her)
What did you do with the cards?

BUD
(indicating carton)
In there.

Fran takes the deck of cards and the gin rummy score pad out of the carton, settles herself on the couch, starts to shuffle the cards expertly.

BUD (CONT'D)
What about Mr. Sheldrake?

FRAN
I'm going to send him a fruit cake every Christmas.

Bud sinks down happily on the couch, and Fran holds out the deck to him.

FRAN (CONT'D)
Cut.

Bud cuts a card, but doesn't look at it.

BUD
I love you, Miss Kubelik.

FRAN
(cutting a card)
Seven --
(looking at Bud's card)
-- queen.

She hands the deck to Bud.

BUD
Did you hear what I said, Miss Kubelik? I absolutely adore you.

FRAN
(smiling)
Shut up and deal!

CONTINUED: (2)

Bud begins to deal, never taking his eyes off her. Fran removes her coat, starts picking up her cards and arranging them. Bud, a look of pure joy on his face, deals -- and deals -- and keeps dealing. And that's about it. Story-wise.

FADE OUT.